

TCHAIKOVSKY: EUGENE ONEGIN



Eugene
Onegin
Tchaikovsky

CHANDOS
 OPERA IN
 ENGLISH

CHANDOS

Kiri Te Kanawa *Thomas Hampson*
Neil Rosenshein *Nicolai Gedda*

Orchestra and Chorus of Welsh National Opera *Sir Charles Mackerras*

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

SOLOISTS / ORCHESTRA & CHORUS OF WELSH NATIONAL OPERA / MACKERRAS

CHAN 3042(2)



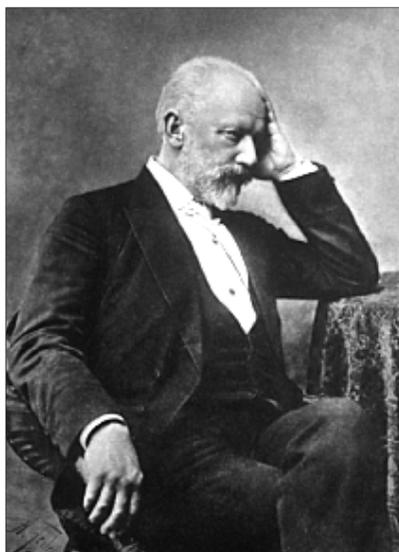
CHAN 3042(2)

CHANDOS

OPERA IN
ENGLISH

Eugene
Oregrin
Tchaikovsky

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION



AKG

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

Eugene Onegin

Opera in three acts

Text by the composer and Konstantin Shilovsky after Alexander Pushkin's
verse novel

Eugene Onegin

English translation by David Lloyd-Jones

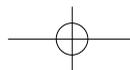
Eugene Onegin	Thomas Hampson baritone
Tatyana	Kiri Te Kanawa soprano
Lensky	Neil Rosenshein tenor
Prince Gremin	John Connell bass
A Captain/Zaretsky	Richard Van Allan bass
Monsieur Triquet	Nicolai Gedda tenor
Madame Larina	Linda Finnie mezzo-soprano
Filippyevna	Elizabeth Bainbridge mezzo-soprano
Olga.....	Patricia Bardon mezzo-soprano

Orchestra and Chorus of Welsh National Opera

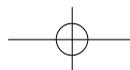
Gareth Jones chorus master

Sir Charles Mackerras

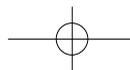




	Time	Page
COMPACT DISC ONE		
Act I		
[1] Introduction	2:39	92
Scene 1		
No. 1 Duet and Quartet		
[2] 'Oh, did you hear the lovesick shepherd boy' <i>Tatyana, Olga, Madame Larina, Nurse</i>	5:08	92
No. 2 Chorus and Dance of the Peasants		
[3] 'My legs ache and can no longer run' <i>Leader (John Hudson), Peasants, Madame Larina</i>	2:39	94
[4] 'In a cottage by the water' <i>Peasants</i>	2:05	94
No. 3 Scene and Aria		
[5] 'Oh, how I love to hear the people singing' <i>Tatyana, Olga</i>	0:58	95
[6] 'I'm not the sort to sit in silence' <i>Olga</i>	2:35	95
No. 4 Scene		
[7] 'Come here, my darling Olga!' <i>Madame Larina, Nurse, Tatyana, Peasants, Olga</i>	3:10	95

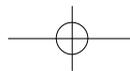


	Time	Page
No. 5 Scene and Quartet		
[8] 'Mesdames, I hope that you'll excuse me' <i>Lensky, Onegin, Madame Larina</i>	1:48	97
[9] 'Now tell me, which of them's Tatyana?' <i>Onegin, Lensky, Tatyana, Olga</i>	1:42	97
No. 6 Scene and Arioso		
[10] 'How perfect, how wonderful' <i>Lensky, Olga, Onegin, Tatyana</i>	2:14	98
[11] 'How I love you, I adore you, Olga' <i>Lensky, Olga</i>	3:16	99
No. 7 Closing Scene		
[12] 'Ah, here you are!' <i>Madame Larina, Nurse, Lensky, Onegin</i>	2:40	100
Scene 2		
No. 8 Introduction and Scene		
[13] Introduction	1:38	101
[14] 'There! No more talk tonight'	1:19	101
[15] 'I can't sleep, Nanny'	0:49	101
[16] 'Well, let me think now' <i>Nurse, Tatyana</i>	4:55	101

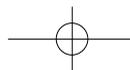


	Time	Page
No. 9 Letter Scene		
17		'To write is foolishness, I know it' 2:52 102
18		"'I had to write'" 3:03 102
19		'No, there could never be another' 1:52 103
20		'For you were always there beside me' 0:50 103
21		"'Are you an angel'" 2:20 103
22		"'No, come what may'" 2:14 103
		<i>Tatyana</i>
No. 10 Scene and Duet		
23		'Ah, night is over!' 2:30 104
24		'Oh, Nanny, may I ask a favour?' 0:25 104
25		'Then make your grandson go in secret' 3:08 104
		<i>Tatyana, Nurse</i>
Scene 3		
No. 11 Chorus of Girls		
26		'Dear companions, come this way' 3:07 105
		<i>Girls</i>
No. 12 Scene and Aria		
27		'Onegin! Here! To see me!' 2:23 106
28		'You wrote a letter' 1:47 106
		<i>Tatyana, Onegin</i>
29		'Were I the sort who had intended' 3:14 106
		<i>Onegin</i>
30		'But try to practise self-control' 1:02 107
		<i>Onegin, Girls</i>

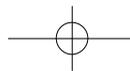
TT 70:30



	Time	Page
COMPACT DISC TWO		
Act II		
Scene 1		
No. 13 Entr'acte, Waltz and Chorus		
1		Entr'acte and Waltz 2:38 107
2		'This is superb!' 1:45 107
		<i>Guests</i>
3		'Certainly! But why aren't you dancing?' 1:03 108
		<i>Captain, Guests</i>
4		'So that's their verdict!' 2:19 108
		<i>Onegin, Lensky, Guests</i>
No. 14 Scene and Triquet's Couplets		
5		'How can I have deserved to be so taunted by you?' 2:22 109
		<i>Lensky, Olga, Onegin</i>
6		'By chance I 'ave with me a song' 0:44 110
7		"'A cette fête conviée'" 2:39 110
		<i>Triquet, Guests</i>
No. 15 Mazurka and Scene		
8		' <i>Messieurs! Mesdames!</i> ' 1:13 111
		<i>Captain</i>
		<i>Mazurka</i>
9		'Why aren't you dancing, Lensky?' 3:14 111
		<i>Onegin, Lensky, Guests, Madame Larina</i>



	Time	Page
No. 16 Finale		
10 'Here in your house!' <i>Lensky, Olegin, Tatyana, Olga, Madame Larina, Guests</i>	2:50	112
11 'Your challenge I accept' <i>Olegin, Lensky, Guests, Olga</i>	1:52	114
Scene 2		
No. 17 Introduction, Scene and Aria		
12 Introduction	1:59	115
13 'What's happened? Where can your opponent be?' <i>Zaretsky, Lensky</i>	1:14	115
14 'How far, how far away you seem now' <i>Lensky</i>	6:22	115
No. 18 Duel Scene		
15 'Ah, here they are!'	1:55	116
16 'We fight to satisfy our honour' <i>Zaretsky, Olegin, Lensky</i>	4:02	116
Act III		
Scene One		
17 No. 19 Polonaise	4:19	117
No. 20 Scene and Aria		
18 'Here, too, I'm bored!' <i>Olegin</i>	2:25	117
19 Ecossaise	1:50	117



	Time	Page
20 'The Princess Gremina!' <i>Guests, Olegin, Tatyana, Gremin</i>	2:15	119
No. 20a Aria		
21 'The gift of love is rightly treasured' <i>Gremin</i>	5:41	119
No. 21 Scene and Arioso		
22 'And now, you must be introduced to her' <i>Gremin, Tatyana, Olegin</i>	1:21	119
23 'Is this the very same Tatyana' <i>Olegin</i>	2:22	120
Scene 2		
No. 22 Final Scene		
24 Introduction	1:39	120
25 'Why, why did he return and write this letter?' <i>Tatyana, Olegin</i>	2:15	120
26 'Olegin, I was then far younger' <i>Tatyana</i>	2:15	121
27 'Ah, Tatyana!'	3:15	121
28 'Olegin, as a man of honour'	2:07	122
29 'Olegin! Leave me, I entreat you' <i>Olegin, Tatyana</i>	1:40	122



St Petersburg ball, Act III Scene 1
from Welsh National Opera's 1993
production of *Eugene Onegin*

Catherine Ashmore



Kiri te Kanawa



Tchaikovsky: Eugene Onegin

How pleasant to avoid all the routine Pharaohs, Ethiopian princesses, poisoned cups and all the rest of these tales about automata. What poetry there is in *Onegin*! Thus wrote Tchaikovsky to his brother Modest in May 1877, as he began work on his new opera, *Eugene Onegin*.

It was the singer Elizaveta Lavrovskaya who had suggested to him at a recent party that he should consider Pushkin's 'novel in verse' as the basis for an opera. Tchaikovsky's initial reaction, like that of most of his friends and acquaintances, was unfavourable, and he was tempted to reject the idea of *Eugene Onegin* out of hand and concentrate instead on two alternative and more promising suggestions, Shakespeare's *Othello* and Alfred de Vigny's *Cinq-mars*. Surely Pushkin's work was far too subtle and much too highly regarded in literary circles for him to dare subjecting it to an operatic treatment, with all the adherence to artificial convention which that would involve? Moreover, at first sight it did not appear to contain anything like enough action to sustain a full-length stage work, for the basic story around which Pushkin had woven his elegant

verse was extremely slight. However, over the course of a few days the composer was quick to change his mind and recognise that ultimately the poem's dramatic defects could be overcome by the 'richness of its poetry' and its 'humanity and simplicity'. Above all, he was confident that he could produce an operatic version of *Eugene Onegin* which would genuinely complement the work on which it was based, rather than destroy its essential character and thus attract the opprobrium of Pushkin's many admirers. Though he was not entirely successful in this regard – Turgenev, for instance, found much to criticise in the libretto – it is generally acknowledged today that with *Eugene Onegin* Tchaikovsky produced both his own operatic masterpiece, as well as one of the most enduring contributions to the nineteenth-century Russian repertoire.

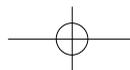
Once his interest had been aroused, Tchaikovsky was eager to set to work: the entire scenario was drafted during the course of just one sleepless night, and the following day he presented it to his friend Konstantin Shilovsky with the request that he turn it into a libretto as quickly as possible. From the

outset, Tchaikovsky felt that it would be necessary for him to adopt an essentially radical approach if the project were to be successful, a fact he took particular pains to point out to Shilovsky. More than anything else, he wanted to avoid the stultifying operatic conventions of his day, which he felt would be unable to do justice to Pushkin's highly-charged text. Significantly, he soon dispensed with Shilovsky's services altogether and himself took over the fashioning of the libretto for a work which he was to describe, with characteristic precision, as a set of 'lyrical scenes in three acts'.

Though this was not Tchaikovsky's first opera – he had already worked on several abortive projects, including a setting of Pushkin's *Boris Godunov* and a treatment of the *Undine* legend, as well as the historically based *The Opridnik* and what he later called his 'brilliant failure', *Vakula the Smith* (later revised as *Cherevichki*) – never before had he identified so closely with any of his dramatic projects. To some extent, this may perhaps be explained by his growing realisation that through the medium of his music he could provide the ideal counterpart to Pushkin's sophisticated narrative style, that element of the original which, unlike its dramatic substance, could not be directly

transplanted onto the operatic stage. However, from his earliest acquaintance with the Pushkin text, he had been most deeply moved by the episode in which Tatyana sits up throughout the night penning her innocent and impulsive declaration of love to Onegin, only to have him cruelly reject her advances when they meet the next morning. Indeed, it was with the intention that this passage (part of which provides the basis of the famous 'Letter Scene') should form the emotional focus of the opera that Tchaikovsky drafted his scenario. Soon it was to take on an even more personal significance.

Inspired as he clearly was by the figure of the spurned Tatyana, it is scarcely surprising that, having produced his scenario, Tchaikovsky should then have had cause to reconsider his reaction to an unsolicited love letter which he had received a few weeks earlier from a young student at the Conservatory. To the composer, the similarity between his own position and that of the central character in his new opera must have seemed like the direct intervention of Fate, a force whose warnings he was always ready to heed. Afraid of playing Onegin to her Tatyana, Tchaikovsky agreed to wed Antonia Milyukova, even though, having long ago come to terms with his homosexual



orientation, he was unwilling to contemplate any physical relationship with his intended bride. In the event, the marriage, duly solemnised in July 1877, proved to be both short-lived and disastrous, plunging the composer into a serious depression from which he was even forced to seek relief by attempting suicide some two months later.

The composition of *Eugene Onegin* thus took place against a backdrop of serious personal difficulties, but though these sapped the composer's energy, they never succeeded in distracting him totally from the project in hand. His recovery from nervous breakdown, when it came, owed much to his recent friendship with the mysterious widow Nadezhda von Meck who, by becoming his patroness, was able to offer help of a material kind, as well as vital intellectual stimulation. Their relationship, conducted entirely through letters and never in person, was to be one of the most significant creative forces in Tchaikovsky's life from this point onwards and was movingly acknowledged in the dedication of his contemporaneous Fourth Symphony to 'My Best Friend'. Throughout 1877 and early 1878, as he travelled in turn to Switzerland, France, Italy, and Austria in order to recuperate his strength, he continued work on

the opera, sending back accounts to Nadezhda von Meck, until finally in February 1878, following a frenetic final burst of activity, he was able to announce its completion.

Tchaikovsky now turned his energies to making arrangements for the staging of *Eugene Onegin*. Just as he had been eager to tread new paths in his approach to the construction of the libretto and its setting to music, so was he also concerned to inject a new freshness and vitality into its performance. At an early stage, he was aware that ideally his score would require singers of a different calibre to those readily available at the Imperial Opera Houses. 'Where shall I find the Tatyana whom Pushkin imagined, and whom I have tried to illustrate musically?', he wrote. 'How vulgar will Pushkin's captivating portrayal be made, when it is transferred to the stage, with its conventions, its meaningless traditions, its veterans of both sexes who take on, with no shame at all, the roles of sixteen-year-old girls and beardless youths!'

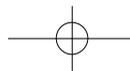
A solution presented itself in the shape of the students of the Moscow Conservatory, who Tchaikovsky thought might be better able to deal with his score than singers trained in the conventional manner. Consequently, in early November 1877 he had approached his

friend Rubinstein, the director of the Conservatory, with a request that he arrange for the staging of part of the opera, namely the whole of the first act and the first part of the second. Initially, Rubinstein doubted the wisdom of this plan, fearing that it might inflict long-term damage on Tchaikovsky's reputation: however, he eventually acquiesced, and in December 1878 a truncated version was given in dress rehearsal at the Conservatory. On 29 March 1879, Rubinstein conducted a performance of the full work at the Maly Theatre using a student chorus and largely student orchestra, and though Tchaikovsky's treatment of Pushkin was censured in some quarters, in general his new opera found favour with most of the critics. Two years later, on 23 January 1881, *Eugene Onegin* was seen in its first fully professional staging at Moscow's Bolshoy Theatre, following which it soon earned a permanent place in the repertory of companies throughout Europe.

Given the trepidation with which Tchaikovsky had first approached the subject matter of his opera, the success of *Eugene Onegin* is all the more remarkable. This may perhaps in part be attributed to its score, where the high standards of melodic

invention, colour, and lyricism which the Russian public had come to expect of him are abundantly displayed: however, *Eugene Onegin* also reveals a composer with a sure dramatic touch, whose transformation of a Byronic narrative into an effective piece of musical theatre places him in the highest rank of operatic composers. Above all, due recognition must be given to Tchaikovsky's unerring sense of what would and would not prove effective on the operatic stage. Choosing to frame his opera around selected episodes from Pushkin's poem was a strategy fraught with risk, for at a stroke he had thereby changed the fundamentally narrative character of the original. However, what Tchaikovsky was quick to appreciate was that this approach, in which attention is firmly focused on the emotional climaxes of the story such as Onegin's renunciation of Tatyana and Lensky's farewell to the world, would give his opera a truly universal appeal. Like the great operas of Mozart and Verdi, *Eugene Onegin* does far more than merely present a series of events through the medium of opera: instead, its main concern is the portrayal of genuinely human characters with whose feelings and actions the audience may identify closely.

In this sense, Tchaikovsky surpasses even



Pushkin's achievement, for much of the poem's subtlety may be appreciated only by those familiar with the insidious tension between city and rural society in nineteenth-century Russia, whereas the opera has an attraction which has survived down the generations and across many nationalities.

Though it was Tchaikovsky's response to Pushkin which determined the essential character of his opera, due acknowledgement must be given to the many other influences which also came to bear on the work. Just as in his orchestral music he remained closer to the traditions of Western Europe than many of his contemporaries, such as Balakirev and Cui, who chose instead to follow a defiantly 'Slavophile' path, so too in his operas did he derive much inspiration from works outside the Russian repertoire. For *Eugene Onegin*, his encounter with Bizet's *Carmen* during a visit to Paris in 1876 proved seminal: Modest tells us that it was 'one of the most powerful musical impressions of his life', and though the plots of the two operas are very different, they inhabit some of the same emotional world. Equally important, perhaps, was the visit to Bayreuth which Tchaikovsky made in 1876 for the first performance of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Though the influence of Wagner

in his music is difficult to trace, it is perhaps significant that *Eugene Onegin* makes a more prominent and developed use of reminiscence motives than do his earlier operas.

Undoubtedly the most important musical influence on Tchaikovsky was, however, the indigenous tradition of opera which had grown up in his country over the course of the preceding four decades, following the appearance of Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar* in 1836. The Russian quality of Pushkin's poem is reflected in Tchaikovsky's conscious adaption of many of the features of the national style of opera: the rustic Harvest Chorus in Act I, for example, has many counterparts, as do the characteristic dances, such as the Polonaise in Act III. Nonetheless, in Tchaikovsky's hands such features are used to a quite different end, for *Eugene Onegin* is far more a realist opera in the manner of Verdi's *La traviata* than it is a work of the Nationalist school. While Russian elements contribute enormously to the vivid atmosphere of the opera, its main concern remains the unfolding of the tragic love story with a universal and timeless significance which has not been lost on generations of commentators and audiences alike.

© 1994 Ewan West

Synopsis

COMPACT DISC ONE

Act I

1 Introduction

Scene 1

The garden of the Larin country estate on a late summer's evening. Madame Larina is making jam, aided by the family nurse, Filippyevna.

2 From outside the house, the two Larina sisters, Tatyana and Olga, are heard singing a folk song. Its tale of a lovesick shepherd boy awakens in Madame Larina memories which she shares with Filippyevna of her own youthful love affairs and eventual arranged marriage.

3 A group of peasants arrive, weary from their labours in the fields. Their leader presents a decorated sheaf of corn to Madame Larina as a symbol that the harvest has all been safely gathered in.

4 At her request, the peasants celebrate by performing a harvest dance and song. As they recount the tale of the miller's daughter and how she repulses the advances of a wealthy yet fickle farmer, Tatyana and Olga come out to listen.

5 In their reactions to the folk song, the two sisters demonstrate their different characters. For the more introspective Tatyana, the singing evokes an undefined yearning; for the extrovert Olga, however, it simply makes her want to dance.

6 Picking up the words of the peasants, Olga sings of her carefree spirit and zest for life.

7 As the peasants leave, Madame Larina and Filippyevna ask Tatyana why she looks so distressed, thinking she must be ill. She replies, however, that it is the effect of the moving love story which she is reading.

8 The young landowner Lensky, who has been courting Olga for some time, arrives, bringing with him a friend and new neighbour, Eugene Onegin.

9 While Onegin quizzes Lensky about Tatyana, she reveals that his appearance has awakened within her sudden desires. Olga is not slow to recognise this change in her sister's mood.

10 Olga and Lensky declare their love for each other. Onegin engages Tatyana in polite and rather stilted conversation, asking how she can be happy living in a rural environment which offers so few social distractions; her reply, that she spends her time reading and daydreaming, betrays her essentially romantic temperament.



[11] As Onegin and Tatyana move away, Lensky now pours out his feelings for Olga; these are heartily reciprocated.

[12] With night falling, Madame Larina comes out to bid her guests to supper. Onegin escorts Tatyana into the house, watched by Filippjevna. The nurse thinks she detects signs that her charge has fallen for their new visitor.

Scene 2

Tatyana's room, later that evening

[13] Introduction

[14] Filippjevna tells Tatyana it is bedtime.

[15] While preparing for bed, Tatyana asks Filippjevna about the past.

[16] Was she ever in love? Once the nurse has recounted the story of her bleak marriage, Tatyana tells of her own troubled emotions.

[17] Left alone, Tatyana goes to the writing table and begins to pen a letter to Onegin. After a hesitant start, she pours out her feelings for him.

[18] Her heart, she writes, compelled her to declare her love. Perhaps, if she had never met him she might have, in time, married someone else.

[19] Rising from the table, she realises that there never could be anyone else.

[20] She had always loved him.

[21]–[22] She resumes the letter imploring Onegin to rescue her from the tormented state to which she has been reduced.

[23] As the morning breaks, the letter is finished. Filippjevna comes to wake Tatyana.

[24] She asks a favour of her nurse to which Filippjevna agrees.

[25] Tatyana gives her the declaration of love and asks her to see that it is delivered to Onegin.

Scene 3

On the Larin estate, the next day

[26] A group of peasant girls sing as they gather berries.

[27] Tatyana appears, distraught at the news that Onegin has come to see her: already she regrets her impulsive action.

[28] He speaks to her somewhat coldly, for though her letter has caused old emotions to stir within him, he is surprised that she should write so openly to a comparative stranger.

[29] Had he intended to lead a life of domestic bliss, Onegin tells her, he could not have hoped for a more worthy partner than Tatyana. However, he no longer feels himself destined to marry and believes that he could not reciprocate Tatyana's devotion.

[30] As the peasant girls continue to perform

their joyful song, Onegin counsels Tatyana to practise self-control and to wait until a more suitable consort appears.

COMPACT DISC TWO

Act II

Scene 1

The ballroom in Madame Larina's house, the following January. It is Tatyana's name day, and a ball is being held in her honour.

[1] A waltz is danced.

[2] The guests, many of whom are neighbouring landowners, express their delight at the occasion, which is a welcome relief from their normal routine.

[3] Onegin, who has been brought by Lensky, dances with Tatyana. This causes some comment, for the company considers him unworthy of Tatyana on account of his unpleasant character and notorious evil living.

[4] Onegin overhears their comments and, having decided to punish Lensky for persuading him to attend the ball, insists on dancing with Olga.

[5] Lensky, jealous at the attention Olga is giving to Onegin, accuses her of flirting with

him. Olga, who is merely being light-hearted, tells Lensky that he is silly to make so much of a harmless dance, but to taunt him further agrees to partner Onegin once again.

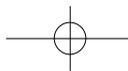
[6]–[7] An old French tutor, Monsieur Triquet, performs some couplets he has written in honour of Tatyana.

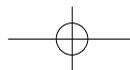
[8] The next dance is announced: a mazurka. Onegin takes one turn with Olga and then conducts her to a seat. All the while, Lensky watches.

[9] Lensky begins to quarrel with Onegin, accusing him of making unwelcome advances towards Olga. Onegin attempts to calm him down, but Lensky is beyond reason. He challenges Onegin to a duel. Madame Larina is shocked that this should be happening in her house.

[10] Lensky recalls the happy days he has formerly spent in Madame Larina's house. Tatyana is horrified that Onegin will be killed and lost to her for ever, while Olga, Madame Larina, and the assembled company upbraid young men for acting so blindly and impulsively. Onegin is secretly remorseful for his actions.

[11] However, he accepts Lensky's challenge in order to teach him a lesson for so foolishly misinterpreting innocent actions.





Scene 2

A watermill on the banks of a wooded stream. It is early morning and the sun has only just risen.

¹² Introduction

¹³ Zaretsky, an officer and Lensky's second, asks where Onegin is, wondering whether he is lost.

¹⁴ Lensky, filled with foreboding, senses that he is about to be killed in the duel. He recalls the days of his youth and his love for Olga.

¹⁵ Onegin arrives, bringing with him only a servant as his second.

¹⁶ As their seconds confer, Onegin and Lensky make one last futile attempt at reconciliation. In the ensuing duel, Lensky is still.

Act III

Scene 1

Several years later. Prince Gremin's house in St Petersburg

¹⁷ The guests dance a polonaise and then break off into groups to converse.

¹⁸ Onegin has returned to St Petersburg after several fruitless years wandering the world, attempting to escape his past. But he still cannot forget that he killed the only friend he ever valued, whose spectre still haunts him constantly. The other guests comment on his gloomy presence.

¹⁹ An écossaise is danced.

²⁰ Prince Gremin enters with his wife, who is none other than Tatyana. Onegin recognises her, though with difficulty, for she has changed from being a simple provincial girl into dignified princess. Tatyana inquires after the stranger, who by now is talking to her husband, and on hearing Onegin's name begins secretly to tremble with emotion.

²¹ The elderly Prince Gremin tells Onegin of the deep love he feels for his young wife and how it has transformed his otherwise barren existence.

²² Onegin and Tatyana are introduced to each other by Prince Gremin and she acknowledges fleetingly their former acquaintance.

²³ When Tatyana leaves, Onegin reflects on the changes which have overcome her. Now regretful at having once rejected her, he is filled with a new ardour and decides to declare his love to her.

Scene 2

A room in Prince Gremin's house, the next morning

²⁴ Introduction

²⁵ Tatyana has received a letter from Onegin in which he has announced his feelings for her. Weeping, she recalls how she once felt for him. Onegin arrives, imploring her pity.

²⁶ Wiping away her tears, Tatyana reminds Onegin of how they first met and how coolly, and to her cruelty, he received her adolescent expressions of love. Now she realises how right he then was, for she was indeed too simple and unsophisticated. Does he only love her now because she is rich and well connected?

²⁷ Despite Onegin's protestations, she does not yield.

²⁸ Though she is tempted to give in to the love which begins to awaken anew in her heart, she must remain faithful to her husband.

²⁹ She begs Onegin to leave. As she flees from the room, Onegin is overwhelmed by despair and contemplates his miserable fate.

© Ewan West

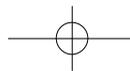
Kiri Te Kanawa gained legendary status almost overnight after her sensational debut as the Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. From then, she moved rapidly into the front rank of international opera, and has become one of the most famous sopranos in the world. At the time of her operatic debut she was already an experienced concert and recording artist, and equally at home in front of the cameras as on stage. Continuing to develop as a recitalist, she

is now a much sought-after singer in a wide variety of musical contexts.

Kiri Te Kanawa is a familiar figure in the leading opera houses of the world – Covent Garden, the Metropolitan Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, the Paris Opéra, Sydney Opera House, the Vienna State, La Scala, San Francisco, Munich, Cologne and the Verona Opera. Her lyric soprano heroines include the three major leading roles by Richard Strauss (Arabella, The Marschallin, and the Countess in *Capriccio*); Mozart's Fiordiligi, Donna Elvira, Pamina and Countess Almaviva; Verdi's Violetta, Amelia Boccanegra, Desdemona; Puccini's Tosca, Mimì and Manon Lescaut; Johann Strauss's Rosalinde, and Tchaikovsky's Tatyana, also Bizet's Micaela, and Gounod's Marguerite.

She has released a number of distinguished recordings including the complete *Don Giovanni*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Così fan tutte*, *Die Zauberflöte* and *Tosca*, *La rondine* and *Manon Lescaut*, as well as *Simon Boccanegra*, *Arabella*, *Otello*, *La traviata*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Faust*, *Carmen*, *Capriccio* and *La bohème*, along with selections of arias from French, Italian and German operas.

Kiri Te Kanawa was created a Dame in 1982, and in the 1995 Queen's Birthday



Honours List she was awarded the prestigious Order of New Zealand.

America's leading baritone, **Thomas Hampson** has been recognised for his versatility and breadth of achievement in opera, song, recording and research. He enjoys an international career that has taken him to all the world's most prestigious stages and concert halls and has made him one of today's most respected, innovative and sought-after soloists. He has furthered his commitment to the art of song not only by teaching, but also by researching repertoire, and designing multi-media projects like *Voices from the Heart*, a performance documentary on the music of Stephen Foster for the Hessischer Rundfunk und Arte.

Hampson's operatic roles span a wide range, from Rossini to Verdi and Puccini, and from Monteverdi to Britten and Henze. Among his celebrated recent portrayals have been the title roles in *Guillaume Tell* (Vienna), *Eugene Onegin* (Vienna and Paris), in Ambroise Thomas's *Hamlet* (Monte Carlo and San Francisco) and in the rarely heard baritone version of Massenet's *Werther* (New York); Père Germont in *La traviata* (Zurich); the Marquis of Posa in the original French version of Verdi's *Don*

Carlos (Paris, London, Edinburgh); Wolfram in Wagner's *Tannhäuser* (Zürich), Busoni's *Dr Faustus* (Salzburg), and Szymanowski's *King Roger* (Birmingham). The 2000/2001 season features performances of *Dr Faustus* (New York), *Hamlet* (Paris), and *Eugene Onegin*, *Guillaume Tell*, *Die lustige Witwe* and *Linda di Chamounix* (Vienna), as well as a role debut as Oreste in Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride* in Salzburg. Almost all of Hampson's recordings have received the rewards of the industry, including six *Grammy* nominations and three *Gramophone* awards.

The versatile American tenor **Neil Rosenshein** is known equally for his memorable stage portrayals and his thoughtful musicianship. He appears with equal success on the opera stage and in concert halls in repertoire by composers from the Baroque to the twentieth century.

In the 2000/2001 season Neil Rosenshein will sing Herod in *Salome* with the Milwaukee Symphony, and Tikhon in *Káta Kabanová* with Houston Grand Opera. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Alfredo in *La traviata*, going on to perform there the title role in Gounod's *Faust*, the Prince in a new production of *Rusalka*, the title role in *Peter Grimes*, and both Alfred and Eisenstein in

Die Fledermaus. A specialist in the French repertoire, he has also been seen at the Met in the title role of *Werther* and has appeared as Don José in *Carmen* with the Met in the Parks. He has been a guest of every major opera house in the United States.

Neil Rosenshein's European performances have taken him to The Royal Opera, Covent Garden (Lensky in *Eugene Onegin*, and Steva in *Jentíá*); the Paris Opéra and Hamburg Staatsoper (Alfredo); Zurich Opera (Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*); Opéra de Lausanne (Cavaradossi and Werther); Grand Théâtre de Genève (Tom Rakewell in *The Rake's Progress*); and the Netherlands Opera for the title roles in *Don Carlo* and Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg*. He has also performed in Essen, Bonn, Brussels, Lisbon, Lille, Nice, Marseilles, Toulouse, Lyon, and with New Israeli Opera. In Japan, he has performed the role of Lensky with the Pacific Music Festival, and has sung the tenor solo in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in a Peace Concert given in Hiroshima.

John Connell studied at the Royal Northern College of Music with Patrick McGuigan and at the National Opera Studio. He made his debut at English National Opera as Ramphis in

Aida and the following season joined the company as principal bass. He sang regularly with English National Opera as a guest artist and his roles there have included the Commendatore (*Don Giovanni*), Colline (*La bohème*), The Monk (*Don Carlos*), The First Voice (Busoni's *Doktor Faust*), Ferrando (*Il trovatore*), Leporello (*The Stone Guest*), The Old Convict (*Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*), Basilio (*The Barber of Seville*), Dansker (*Billy Budd*), Banquo (*Macbeth*), Pogner (*The Mastersingers*) and Sarastro (*The Magic Flute*). He has also sung for The Royal Opera and Opera North.

Recordings include *Peter Grimes* (for Chandos), *Billy Budd*, *Elijah*, Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater* and Vaughan Williams's *Serenade to Music*. For BBC radio he has recorded a studio opera, *The Burglers of Calais*. Other engagements have included concert performances of *Die Walküre* in Spain, Sarastro with Welsh National Opera and Padre Guardiano (*The Force of Destiny*) with English National Opera.

Nicolai Gedda is internationally acknowledged as one of the greatest artists of our time and has been acclaimed for his command of a repertoire which encompasses almost every style and period in the field of opera, oratorio, operetta, song and orchestral works.

Born in Sweden of Russian–Swedish parents, he made his professional debut at the Royal Opera, Stockholm in 1952 in *Le Postillon de Longjumeau*. In 1953 he made his debut at La Scala, Milan followed in 1954 by his debut at the Paris Opéra, and in 1957 with his Metropolitan Opera debut (in the title role of Gounod's *Faust*). Since his debut with The Royal Opera in 1965 (as the Duke of Mantua in Verdi's *Rigoletto*) he returned to sing Benvenuto Cellini, Alfredo, Gustavus III in *Un ballo in maschera*, Nemorino and Lensky. He created leading roles in Barber's *Vanessa* and Menotti's *The Last Savage* at the Metropolitan Opera.

His operatic triumphs have ranged from the works of Haydn and Mozart to Stravinsky, Orff, Barber and Menotti, while in recital he is regarded as an outstanding interpreter of lieder. Nicolai Gedda has worked with almost all of the great international conductors of the past thirty-five years, including Beecham, Bernstein, Giulini, Klemperer, and Solti. He also has the distinction of being the most recorded tenor in the world with 200 recordings to his credit. These include complete opera performances of *Guillaume Tell*, *La bohème*, *Faust*, *Werther*, *Manon*, *Così fan tutte* and *Benvenuto Cellini*.

Nicolai Gedda recently gave a highly successful concert of opera and operetta arias at the Royal Opera House, and returned there for a new production of Pfitzner's *Palestrina*.

Dublin-born **Patricia Bardon** first came to prominence as a prize-winner in the inaugural Cardiff Singer of the World Competition, and since then has become established as a leading international operatic and concert performer.

Her operatic roles include Arsace (*Semiramide*) at La Fenice, Venice; the title role in *La Cenerentola* at La Monnaie, Brussels; the title role in *Carmen* for the Hamburg Staatsoper, Welsh National Opera and Scottish Opera; Penelope (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) at the Maggio Musicale in Florence and in Athens with Trevor Pinnock; the title role in Handel's *Orlando* in New York, Paris, Lyon, Strasbourg and Montpellier with William Christie and Les Arts Florissants; Smeton (*Anna Bolena*) in San Francisco; Amastris (*Serse*) for the Munich Staatsoper with Ivor Bolton, and in Dresden and Montpellier; Juno (*Semele*) in Innsbruck with René Jacobs; the title role in *Tamerlano* at the Beaune Festival; Helen (*King Priam*) for De Vlaamse Opera, Antwerp, and Third Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*) in Verona; roles in *Guillaume Tell*, *Mosè in Egitto*,

Rigoletto, *La fanciulla del West* and *Mefistofele* for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and numerous roles for Opera North, Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera, English National Opera and Glyndebourne. Future engagements include appearances at the Chicago Lyric Opera, the Maggio Musicale with Zubin Mehta, the Munich Staatsoper, English National Opera and Amsterdam.

Patricia Bardon's extensive and wide-ranging concert repertoire has taken her to La Scala, Madrid, Brussels, Berlin, the Edinburgh and Montreux Festivals, Cincinnati and Tokyo. Her recordings include *Orlando*, *Elijah*, Erda (*The Rhinegold*) for Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation), Amastris (*Serse*), and *Rigoletto*.

Richard Van Allan is one of Britain's most distinguished bass-baritones. He is a member of English National Opera, appearing in many leading roles, and has also appeared at Covent Garden, Opera North, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Welsh National Opera and Scottish Opera. He is also Director of the National Opera Studio. His operatic engagements abroad have taken him to New York's Metropolitan Opera, the Paris Opéra, Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, San Diego, Miami and Seattle. Roles have included the title role

in Massenet's *Don Quixote* (for English National Opera and Victoria State Opera), Theseus (*The Fairy Queen*), Basilio, Old Man (*King Priam*) for Flanders Opera and English National Opera, and Don Jerome (*La Dueña* for Opera North).

Richard Van Allan's recordings include Mozart's *Così fan tutte* with Montserrat Caballé, Janet Baker and Ileana Cotrubas conducted by Sir Colin Davis, *Don Giovanni* with Bernard Haitink, Raleigh (Britten's *Gloriana*) with Sir Charles Mackerras, *Billy Budd*, and for Chandos Roberto Gerhard's *La Dueña*.

Linda Finnie was born in Scotland and studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and the Royal Academy of Music. She has appeared with all the major British opera companies, notably with English National Opera as Brangäne (*Tristan and Isolde*), Eboli (*Don Carlos*), Amneris (*Aida*), Ortrud (*Lohengrin*) and Ulrica (*A Masked Ball*), and with The Royal Opera as Waltraute (*Götterdämmerung*). Abroad she has appeared in Paris, Geneva, Frankfurt, Flanders, Lille, Nice, Vienna, Tokyo, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, and at the Bayreuth Festival.

Linda Finnie's many recordings on Chandos

include works by Bliss, Diepenbrock, Korngold and Respighi, as well as Mahler song-cycles, *Elijah*, Elgar's *Sea Pictures* and *The Light of Life*, and Prokofiev's *Ivan the Terrible* (winner of the *Deutsche Schallplattenpreis*).

Elizabeth Bainbridge was born in Lancashire and studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She made her debut at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden in *Die Walküre* in 1964, and joined the Company the following year. Roles include *Mistress Quickly*, Suzuki, Amneris, Emilia, Erda, Arvidson, Filippjevna, She-Ancient (*The Midsummer Marriage*), Grandmother Buryja (*Jenůfka*) and Auntie (*Peter Grimes*). She appeared with The Royal Opera at the Teatro alla Scala (1976), in South Korea and Japan (1979), at the 1984 Olympic Arts Festival, Los Angeles, and in the 1985 Athens Festival. Recordings include *Norma*, *Les Troyens*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *Dido and Aeneas* and *The Midsummer Marriage*.

The **Orchestra of Welsh National Opera** was founded in 1970. Since then it has established itself as one of the finest British orchestras, highly praised as much for its distinction in a wide-ranging operatic repertoire as for its concert work and recordings.

Under Richard Armstrong, the Musical Director from 1973 to 1986, the Orchestra developed a broad operatic repertoire. It was during this period that Reginald Goodall first worked with the Orchestra. Sir Charles Mackerras became Musical Director in 1987 and the Orchestra's recording schedule began to expand considerably. Previously several complete operas had been recorded under Richard Bonyngé, with Joan Sutherland, Montserrat Caballé and Pavarotti leading world-class casts. Under Mackerras the orchestra went on to record Janáček's *Osud* (CHAN 3019). Carlo Rizzi has been Musical Director since 1992. In 1995 the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera won the Royal Philharmonic Society Music Award, in the Large Ensemble category.

The **Chorus of Welsh National Opera** began as a professional body in 1968. The reputation of the Chorus grew quickly, and its operatic and concert work has won wide praise, not only in the traditional repertoire such as Verdi, but also in twentieth-century works such as Tippett's *A Midsummer Marriage* and Janáček's *From the House of the Dead*. The Chorus has recorded many operas including *Andrea Chénier* with Riccardo Chailly, *Tristan*

and *Isolde* and *Parsifal* with Reginald Goodall, *I masnadieri*, *Norma*, *Hamlet*, *Ernani*, *Anna Bolena* and *Adriana Lecouvreur* with Richard Bonyngé, *Tosca* with Georg Solti and *Rigoletto*, *Faust* and *Un ballo in maschera* with Carlo Rizzi as well as *The Mikado*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Yeomen of the Guard*, Britten's *Gloriana*, and Janáček's *Osud* with Mackerras. Among concert pieces it has recorded are *Sea Drift* by Delius, *The Vigil of Venus* by George Lloyd and *Hiawatha* by Coleridge-Taylor.

Sir Charles Mackerras was born in 1925 of Australian parents in the United States and studied in Sydney and Prague. He made his debut as an opera conductor at Sadler's Wells Opera, where he was instrumental in producing the sensational first British performance of Janáček's *Kát'a Kabanová*, which led to Janáček's becoming standard repertoire in the UK. He was First Conductor of the Hamburg Opera (1966–9) and Musical Director of both Sadler's Wells (later English National Opera) (1970–77), and of Welsh National Opera (1987–91), where his notable Janáček productions and many others won great acclaim. The production and recording of *Osud* were sponsored by the Peter Moores

Foundation. He is Conductor Laureate of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Conductor Emeritus of Welsh National Opera, Principal Guest Conductor of the San Francisco Opera, and from the 1998/99 season Music Director of the Orchestra of St Luke's, New York. He has for many years been associated with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden and conducts regularly at The Metropolitan Opera, New York.

Sir Charles Mackerras has undertaken much research into performance practice of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which has profoundly affected today's interpretations. His vast discography includes an award-winning cycle of Janáček operas with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Britten's *Gloriana* and Dvořák's *Rusalka* (both of which won *Gramophone* awards), Beethoven, Brahms and Mahler symphonies, and with English National Opera Handel's *Julius Caesar* and Donizetti's *Mary Stuart* (for Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

Sir Charles Mackerras received a CBE in 1974 and was knighted for his services to music in 1979. He has also received The Medal of Merit from the Czech Republic, the Chopin Prize and has been made a Companion of the Order of Australia.

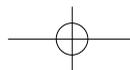
St Petersburg ball, Act III Scene 1,
from Welsh National Opera's 1993
production
of *Eugene Onegin*

Catherine Ashmore



Thomas
Hampson

Simon Fowler



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.

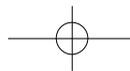
From 1981 to 1983 he was a Governor of the BBC, and a Trustee of the Tate Gallery from 1978 until 1985; from 1988 to 1992 he was a director of Scottish Opera. He received the Gold Medal of the Italian Republic in 1974, an Honorary MA from Christ Church, Oxford, in 1975, and was made an Honorary Member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

Tschaikowsky: Eugen Oegin

Es ist ein wahres Vergnügen, von den ewigen Pharaonen, äthiopischen Prinzessinnen, Giftkelchen und dergleichen Puppengeschichten loszukommen. Wieviel Poesie findet man doch in *Oegin!*

So schrieb Tschaikowsky im Mai 1877, als er die Arbeit an seiner neuen Oper *Eugen Oegin* aufnahm, an seinen Bruder Modest.

Es war die Sängerin Elisaweta Lawrowskaja, die ihm auf einer Gesellschaft kurz davor vorgeschlagen hatte, Puschkins "Versroman" als Grundlage für eine Oper in Erwägung zu ziehen. Genauso wie seine Freunde und Bekannten hielt Tschaikowsky zunächst wenig von der Idee und war versucht, *Eugen Oegin* kurzerhand abzulehnen und sich stattdessen auf zwei andere, vielversprechendere Vorschläge, Shakespeares *Othello* und Alfred de Vignys *Cinq-mars*, zu konzentrieren. Puschkins Werk war doch bestimmt viel zu subtil und in Literaturkreisen viel zu hoch geschätzt, daß er es wagen konnte, es einer Opernbearbeitung unter Einhaltung aller künstlichen Konventionen, die dies mit sich brächte, zu unterziehen? Außerdem schien es auf den ersten Blick bei weitem nicht genug Handlung

für ein abendfüllendes Bühnenwerk zu haben, denn die eigentliche Erzählung, um die Puschkin seine eleganten Verse gesponnen hatte, hatte extrem wenig Gehalt. Im Verlauf der nächsten paar Tage änderte der Komponist jedoch rasch seine Meinung, nachdem er erkannte, daß die dramatischen Mängel des Gedichts letzten Endes durch die "Großartigkeit seiner Dichtung" sowie durch seine "Menschlichkeit und Schlichtheit" überwunden werden konnten. Er war vor allen Dingen zuversichtlich, daß er eine Opernfassung von *Eugen Oegin* hervorbringen konnte, die das Werk, auf dem sie basierte, wirklich ergänzen und seinen grundlegenden Charakter nicht zerstören würde – und somit auch nicht die Schmähungen der zahlreichen Puschkin-Bewunderer auf sich ziehen würde. Obwohl er in dieser Hinsicht nicht ganz erfolgreich war – Turgenjew beispielsweise fand am Libretto einiges auszusetzen –, herrscht heute allgemein die Ansicht, daß Tschaikowsky mit *Eugen Oegin* sowohl sein persönliches Meisterwerk auf dem Gebiet der Oper als auch einen der beständigsten Beiträge zum

russischen Repertoire des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts schuf.

Sobald sein Interesse geweckt worden war, ging Tschaikowsky mit Eifer an die Arbeit: im Lauf einer einzigen schlaflosen Nacht entwarf er das gesamte Szenarium, und am folgenden Tag legte er es seinem Freund Konstantin Schilowsky mit der Bitte vor, es so schnell wie möglich zu einem Libretto auszuarbeiten. Tschaikowsky war von Anfang an der Ansicht, daß er einen im wesentlichen radikalen Ansatz wählen mußte, wenn das Projekt Erfolg haben sollte, und er gab sich besondere Mühe, Schilowsky darauf hinzuweisen. Mehr als alles andere war ihm daran gelegen, die lähmenden Opernkonventionen seiner Zeit zu vermeiden, die seiner Meinung nach Puschkins emotionsgeladenem Text nicht gerecht werden konnten. Bezeichnenderweise verzichtete er bald vollkommen auf Schilowskys Dienste und übernahm selbst die Ausarbeitung des Librettos für ein Werk, das et mit typischer Genauigkeit als eine Folge von "lyrischen Szenen in drei Akten" beschreiben sollte.

Obwohl dies nicht Tschaikowskys erste Oper war – er hatte bereits an mehreren gescheiterten Projekten gearbeitet, darunter eine Vertonung von Puschkins *Boris Godunow*, eine Bearbeitung der *Undine*-Sage sowie die auf

historischen Tatsachen basierende Oper *Opričnik* (Der Leibwächter) und das Werk, das er später als seinen "gelungenen Fehlschlag" bezeichnete, *Kuznez Wakula* (Der Schmied Wakula, später umgearbeitet als *Čerwicki*, (Die Pantöffelchen)) –, hatte er sich nie zuvor so eng mit einem seiner Bühnenvorhaben identifiziert. Bis zu einem gewissen Grad kann dies vielleicht mit seiner wachsenden Erkenntnis erklärt werden, daß er durch seine Musik das ideale Pendant zu Puschkins anspruchsvollem Erzählstil schaffen konnte, jenes Element des Originals, das im Gegensatz zu seinem dramatischen Gehalt nicht direkt auf die Opernbühne verpflanzt werden konnte. Schon bei seiner frühesten Beschäftigung mit dem Puschkin-Text war er von der Episode, in der Tatjana die ganze Nacht aufbleibt und ihre unschuldige und impulsive Liebeserklärung an Oegin verfaßt, nur um bei ihrem Zusammentreffen am nächsten Morgen grausam von ihm abgewiesen zu werden, zutiefst bewegt gewesen. Tschaikowsky entwarf sein Szenarium sogar in der Absicht, daß diese Passage (von der ein Teil die Grundlage der berühmten "Briefszene" bildet) den emotionalen Mittelpunkt der Oper bilden sollte. Bald sollte sie eine noch persönlichere Bedeutung erhalten.

Die Gestalt der verschmähten Tatjana inspirierte Tschaikowsky eindeutig, und es ist daher wohl kaum überraschend, daß er, nachdem er sein Szenarium verfaßt hatte, Grund dazu haben sollte, seine Reaktion auf einen ungebetenen Liebesbrief, der er einige Wochen zuvor von einer jungen Studentin am Konservatorium erhalten hatte, noch einmal zu überdenken. Die Ähnlichkeit zwischen seiner eigenen Lage und der der zentralen Figur seiner neuen Oper muß dem Komponisten wie ein eindeutiger Wink des Schicksals erschienen sein, eine Macht, deren Warnungen er immer bereitwillig Beachtung schenkte. Aus Angst den Onegin zu einer Tatjana zu spielen, erklärte Tschaikowsky sich bereit, Antonina Miljukowa zu heiraten, obwohl er, nachdem er sich schon lange mit seiner homosexuellen Veranlagung abgefunden hatte, nicht gewillt war, eine körperliche Beziehung mit seiner zukünftigen Gattin in Erwägung zu ziehen. Die Ehe, die im Juli 1877 vorschriftsmäßig vollzogen wurde, erwies sich schließlich als katastrophal und von kurzer Dauer und stürzte den Komponisten in schlimme Depressionen, die ihn etwa zwei Monate später sogar soweit trieben, daß er in einem Selbstmordversuch Ausweg suchte.

Die Komponisten von *Eugen Onegin* erfolgte

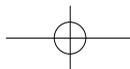
also vor dem Hintergrund ernster persönlicher Probleme, doch obwohl diese dem Komponisten die Energie nahmen, gelang es ihnen nie, ihn völlig von dem Projekt, an dem er arbeitete, abzulenken. Seine letztendliche Erholung von seinem Nervenzusammenbruch war zu einem guten Teil der kurz davor geknüpften Freundschaft mit der mysteriösen Witwe Nadeshda von Meck zu verdanken, die ihm dadurch, daß sie seine Mäzenin wurde, sowohl materielle Hilfe als auch unerläßliche intellektuelle Stimulation bieten konnte. Ihre Beziehung, die ausschließlich durch einen regen Briefwechsel gepflegt wurde – Tschaikowsky und Frau von Meck gingen einer persönlichen Begegnung aus dem Wege –, sollte von diesem Zeitpunkt an einen der wichtigsten schöpferischen Einflüsse in Tschaikowskys Leben darstellen und wurde durch die Widmung seiner in derselben Epoche entstandenen vierten Sinfonie an sie ("A ma meilleure amie") ergreifend anerkannt. In der zweiten Hälfte des Jahres 1877 und Anfang 1878, während er der Reihe nach die Schweiz, Frankreich, Italien und Österreich bereiste, um wieder zu Kräften zu gelangen, setzte er die Arbeit an der Oper fort, wobei er Nadeshda von Meck über seine Fortschritte auf dem laufenden hielt, bis er schließlich im

Februar 1878 nach einem frenetischen abschließenden Ausbruch an Aktivität ihre Fertigstellung bekanntgeben konnte.

Tschaikowsky setzte nun seine Energien dafür ein, Vorbereitungen für die Bühnenaufführung von *Eugen Onegin* zu treffen. So erpicht er darauf gewesen war, bei seinem Ansatz bezüglich des Aufbaus des Librettos und dessen Vertonung neue Wege einzuschlagen, genauso war er auch darum bemüht, seine Aufführung mit neuer Frische und Vitalität zu erfüllen. Schon sehr bald war ihm bewußt geworden, daß seine Partitur idealerweise Sänger von einem anderen Format erforderte als diejenigen, die an den kaiserlichen Opernhäusern zur Verfügung standen. "Wo finde ich eine Tatjana, wie Puschkin sie sich gedacht hat und wie ich sie musikalisch darzustellen versucht habe?", schrieb er. "Wie gemein wird sich Puschkins berückendes Bild auf der Bühne ausnehmen – mit ihren Konventionen, ihren bedeutungslosen Traditionen, ihren Veteranen beider Geschlechter, die ohne jede Scham die Rollen von sechzehnjährigen Mädchen und bartlosen Jünglingen übernehmen!"

Die Lösung dieses Problems bot sich in Gestalt der Studenten des Moskauer Konservatoriums, von denen Tschaikowsky

dachte, sie würden vielleicht eher mit seiner Partitur zurechtkommen als Sänger, die auf herkömmliche Weise ausgebildet worden waren. Folglich war er Anfang November 1877 an seinen Freund Rubinstein, den Leiter des Konservatoriums, mit der Bitte herangetreten, die Bühnenaufführung eines Teils der Oper, nämlich des gesamten ersten Aktes und des ersten Teils des zweiten, zu arrangieren. Rubinstein zweifelte anfangs an der Klugheit dieses Vorhabens, da er befürchtete, es könnte Tschaikowskys Ansehen langfristig Schaden zufügen: Schließlich willigte er jedoch ein, und im Dezember 1878 wurde die Generalprobe einer gekürzten Fassung am Konservatorium gegeben. Am 29. März 1879 dirigierte Rubinstein am Maly-Theater eine Aufführung des gesamten Werkes mit einem Studentenchor und einem Orchester, das weitgehend ebenfalls aus Studenten bestand, und obwohl Tschaikowskys Puschkin-Bearbeitung in gewissen Kreisen kritisiert wurde, fand seine neue Oper im allgemeinen bei den meisten Kritikern Anklang. Zwei Jahre später, am 23. Januar 1881, erlebte *Eugen Onegin* am Moskauer Bolschoitheater seine erste völlig professionelle Bühnenaufführung und verdiente sich in der Folge bald einen



Dauerplatz im Repertoire von Operntruppen in ganz Europa.

Angesichts der Beklommenheit, mit der Tschaikowsky zunächst an den Stoff seiner Oper heranging, ist der Erfolg von *Eugen Onegin* um so bemerkenswerter. Dies kann zum Teil vielleicht auf die Partitur zurückgeführt werden, in der das hohe Niveau von melodischen Einfällen, Klangfarbe und Lyrik, das das einheimische Publikum mittlerweile von ihm erwartete, reichlich demonstriert wird: *Eugen Onegin* läßt Tschaikowsky jedoch außerdem als einen Komponisten mit einer sicheren Hand für Dramatik erkennen, dessen Umarbeitung einer Erzählung im Stile Byrons in ein wirkungsvolles Stück Musiktheater ihn zu einem Opernkomponisten ersten Ranges macht. Man muß vor allem Tschaikowskys untrüglichem Gespür dafür, was sich auf der Opernbühne als wirkungsvoll erweisen würde und was nicht, gebührende Anerkennung zollen. Die taktische Entscheidung, seine Oper um ausgewählte Episoden aus Puschkins Versroman zu konstruieren, war mit Risiken verbunden, denn er veränderte damit mit einem Schlag den dem Original im wesentlichen zugrundeliegenden Erzählcharakter.

Tschaikowsky erkannte jedoch rasch, daß dieser Ansatz, bei dem sich die Aufmerksamkeit eindeutig auf die emotionalen Höhepunkte der Geschichte – wie Onegins Zurückweisung Tatjanas und Lenskis Abschied von der Welt – konzentriert, seiner Oper wahrhaft universelle Anziehungskraft verschaffen würde. So wie die großen Opern Mozarts und Verdis vollbringt *Eugen Onegin* viel mehr als die bloße Darbietung einer Kette von Ereignissen durch das Medium der Oper: sein Hauptanliegen ist stattdessen die Darstellung von wirklich menschlichen Gestalten, mit deren Gefühlen und Handlungen sich das Publikum leicht identifizieren kann. In dieser Hinsicht übertrifft Tschaikowsky sogar Puschkins Leistung, denn ein Großteil der Subtilität von Puschkins Versen kann nur von jemandem gewürdigt werden, der mit den heimtückischen Spannungen zwischen den städtischen und ländlichen Gesellschaftskreisen im Rußland des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts vertraut ist, während die Oper eine Anziehungskraft besitzt, die mehrere Generationen überdauert hat und keine Grenzen kennt.

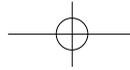
Es war zwar Tschaikowskys Reaktion auf Puschkin, die den grundlegenden Charakter

seiner Oper determinierte, doch sollte auch den zahlreichen anderen Einflüssen, die sich außerdem auf das Werk auswirkten, gebührende Anerkennung gezollt werden. Genauso wie er sich in seiner Orchestermusik enger an westeuropäische Traditionen hielt als viele seiner Zeitgenossen – wie beispielsweise Balakirew und Cui, die statt dessen einen trotzig “slawophilen” Weg einschlugen –, wurde er auch bei seinen Opern stark von Werken außerhalb des russischen Repertoires inspiriert. Seine Begegnung mit Bizets *Carmen* bei einem Parisbesuch im Jahre 1876 erwies sich als folgenreich: Modest berichtet, daß die Oper bei seinem Bruder “einen der stärksten musikalischen Eindrücke seines Lebens” hinterließ, und auch wenn die Handlung der beiden Opern völlig unterschiedlich ist, so bewegen sie sich teilweise doch in der gleichen Gefühlswelt. Ähnlich wichtig war vielleicht der Besuch in Bayreuth, den Tschaikowsky 1876 anlässlich der Uraufführung von *Der Ring des Nibelungen* machte. Der Einfluß Wagners auf seine Musik ist zwar schwer feststellbar, es ist jedoch vielleicht bedeutungsvoll, daß er in *Eugen Onegin* auffälliger und gezielter auf Vergangenes zurückgreifende Motive einsetzt als in seinen früheren Opern.

Den zweifellos bedeutendsten musikalischen Einfluß auf Tschaikowsky übte jedoch die heimische Operntradition aus, die sich in seinem Vaterland im Verlauf der vorangegangenen vier Jahrzehnte – nach der Veröffentlichung von Glinkas *Das Leben für den Zaren* im Jahre 1836 – entwickelt hatte. Das Russische von Puschkins Versen spiegelt sich in Tschaikowskys bewußter Adaptation zahlreicher Merkmale des nationalen Opernstils wider: der rustikale Erntechor im 1. Akt beispielsweise hat genauso wie die charakteristischen Tänze, z.B. die Polonaise im 3. Akt, zahlreiche Pendanten. Dennoch werden diese Merkmale in Tschaikowskys Händen zu einem ganz anderen Zweck verwendet, denn *Eugen Onegin* ist viel eher eine realistische Oper in der Art von Verdis *La traviata* als ein Werk der nationalistischen Schule. Die russischen Elemente tragen zwar enorm zur lebhaften Atmosphäre der Oper bei, ihr Hauptanliegen ist jedoch die Entwicklung der tragischen Liebesgeschichte mit ihrer allgemeingültigen und zeitlosen Bedeutung, die bei Generationen von Interpreten wie Zuschauern einen tiefen Eindruck hinterlassen hat.

© Ewan West





Inhaltsangabe

COMPACT DISC 1

Erster Akt

1 Orchestervorspiel

1. Szene

Im Garten des Larinschen Landgutes an einem Spätsommerabend. Frau Larina kocht Obst ein, wobei ihr die Amme Filipjewna behilflich ist.

2 Man hört die beiden Töchter Larinas, Tatjana und Olga, im Haus ein Volkslied singen, das von einem liebeskranken jungen Schäfer handelt. Es erweckt in Larina Erinnerungen, und gemeinsam mit Filipjewna gedenkt sie der Romanzen ihrer Jugendjahre und der anschließenden, von den Eltern in die Wege geleiteten Ehe.

3 Eine Gruppe Bauern, müde von ihrer Arbeit auf den Feldern, tritt aus. Ihr Anführer überreicht Larina eine geschmückte Korngarbe zum Zeichen, daß die gesamte Ernte wohlbehalten eingebracht worden ist.

4 Auf Larinas Bitte hin feiern die Bauern mit einem Erntetanz und Gesang. Als sie die Geschichte von der Müllerstochter zum besten geben, die die Annäherungsversuche eines

reichen, jedoch treulosen Bauern zurückweist, kommen Tatjana und Olga zum Zuhören heraus.

5 Das Volkslied spricht die beiden charakterlich völlig verschiedenen Schwestern auf unterschiedliche Weise an. In der ernsteren, verträumteren Tatjana weckt der Gesang eine undefinierbare Sehnsucht; die lebenslustigere Olga dagegen will einfach nur mittanzen.

6 Olga wiederholt die Worte der Bauern und singt von ihrem unbekümmerten Gemüt und ihrer Lebensfreude.

7 Als die Bauern abgehen, wollen Larina und Filipjewna wissen, warum Tatjana so bekümmert aussieht; sie befürchten, sie sei krank. Sie meint jedoch, daß die ergreifende Liebesgeschichte, die sie gerade lese, sie nur tief beeindruckt habe.

8 Der junge Landbesitzer Lenski, der Olga seit einiger Zeit den Hof macht, tritt auf. Er hat seinen Freund und neuen Gutsnachbarn, Eugen Onegin, mitgebracht.

9 Während Onegin Lenski über Tatjana ausfragt, wird sie sich bewußt, daß seine Erscheinung in ihr unerwartete Sehnsüchte geweckt hat. Es dauert nicht lange, bis Olga bemerkt, daß sich die Laune ihrer Schwester geändert hat.

10 Olga und Lenski erklären ihre Liebe

füreinander. Währenddessen verwickelt Onegin Tatjana in ein höfliches und ziemlich gespreiztes Gespräch und fragt sie, wie sie in dieser ländlichen Umgebung glücklich sein könne, wo es so wenig Zerstreuung und Gesellschaft gebe; ihre Antwort, daß sie ihre Zeit mit Lesen und Tagträumereien verbringe, verrät, daß sie im Grunde ihres Wesens romantisch veranlagt ist.

11 Während sich Onegin und Tatjana entfernen, verleiht Lenski seinen Gefühlen für Olga beredten Ausdruck; diese werden von Herzen erwidert.

12 Die Nacht bricht herein, und Larina bittet ihre Gäste zum Abendessen ins Haus. Filipjewna beobachtet, wie Onegin Tatjana hineinbegleitet. Die Amme glaubt Anzeichen dafür zu entdecken, daß der Besucher es ihrem Schützling angetan hat.

2. Szene

Tatjanas Schlafgemach, später am selben Abend

13 Orchestervorspiel

14 Filipjewna meint, es wäre für Tatjana Zeit, schlafen zu gehen.

15 Während Tatjana sich auf die Nacht vorbereitet, fragt sie Filipjewna über die Vergangenheit aus.

16 War sie jemals verliebt? Nachdem die Amme die Geschichte ihrer trostlosen Ehe

erzählt hat, spricht Tatjana von ihren eigenen aufgewühlten Gefühlen.

17 Nachdem Filipjewna sich entfernt hat, begibt Tatjana sich an ihr Schreibpult und beginnt, einen Brief an Onegin zu verfassen. Nach anfänglichem Zögern schreibt sie in fliegender Hast von ihren Gefühlen für ihn.

18 Sie schreibt, daß ihr Herz sie dazu veranlaßte, ihm ihre Liebe zu offenbaren. Falls sie ihn nie getroffen hätte, hätte sie irgendwann vielleicht einen anderen geheiratet.

19 Als sie sich vom Schreibpult erhebt, wird ihr bewußt, daß es nie einen anderen geben könnte.

20 Sie hatte ihn immer geliebt.

21–22 Sie setzt ihren Brief damit fort, daß sie Onegin inständig bittet, sie aus ihrem aufgewühlten Zustand zu erretten.

23 Als der Morgen anbricht, ist der Brief fertig. Filipjewna kommt, um Tatjana zu wecken.

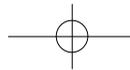
24 Diese bittet sie um einen Gefallen, zu dem sich die Amme bereiterklärt.

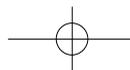
25 Tatjana vertraut ihr die Liebeserklärung an und bittet sie, dafür zu sorgen, daß sie Onegin übermittelt wird.

3. Szene

Auf dem Larinschen Landgut, am nächsten Tag

26 Ein paar Bauernmädchen singen beim Beerenpflücken ein Lied.





²⁷ Tatjana tritt auf. Sie ist beunruhigt darüber, daß Onegin gekommen ist, um sie zu sehen: Inzwischen bereut sie ihre Impulsivität bereits.

²⁸ Er verhält sich ihr gegenüber ziemlich kühl, denn obwohl der Brief in ihm alte Gefühle weckte, ist er überrascht, daß sie einem verhältnismäßig Fremden so freiheraus schreiben sollte.

²⁹ Onegin meint, daß er, falls er vorgehabt hätte, ein glückliches Eheleben zu führen, sich keine würdigere Partnerin als Tatjana erhoffen hätte können. Er fühlt sich jedoch nicht mehr zur Ehe bestimmt und glaubt, daß er Tatjanas Liebe nicht erwidern kann.

³⁰ Während die Bauernmädchen weiterhin ihr fröhliches Lied singen, rät Onegin Tatjana, sich in Selbstbeherrschung zu üben und auf einen passenderen Gemahl zu warten.

COMPACT DISC 2

Zweiter Akt

1. Szene

Im Ballsaal des Larinschen Hauses im darauffolgenden Januar. Es ist Tatjanas Namenstag und ihr zu Ehren wird ein Ball gegeben.

¹ Man tanzt einen Walzer.

² Die Gäste, viele davon Gutsnachbarn, bringen ihre Freude über das Ereignis zum Ausdruck; der Ball ist eine willkommenen Abwechslung vom üblichen Alltagstrott.

³ Onegin, den Lenski mitgebracht hat, tanzt mit Tatjana. Darüber fallen einige Bemerkungen, denn die Gesellschaft erachtet ihn wegen seines unliebenswürdigen Wesens und seines berühmt-berüchtigten Lebenswandels Tatjanas unwürdig.

⁴ Onegin bekommt ihre Bemerkungen mit und beschließt, sich an Lenski dafür zu rächen, daß er ihn dazu überredet hat, den Ball zu besuchen. Er besteht darauf, mit Olga zu tanzen.

⁵ Lenski ist eifersüchtig wegen der Aufmerksamkeit, die Olga Onegin schenkt und beschuldigt sie, mit ihm zu flirten. Olga, die lediglich unbekümmert ist, meint, Lenski sei albern, wegen eines harmlosen Tanzes so ein Theater zu machen, und willigt ein, noch einmal mit Onegin zu tanzen, um Lenski noch mehr aufzuziehen.

⁶–⁷ Der Franzose Triquet gibt einige Couplets zum besten, die er Tatjana zu Ehren geschrieben hat.

⁸ Der nächste Tanz wird angesagt: Mazurka. Onegin tanzt wieder mit Olga und geleitet sie dann auf ihren Platz. Lenski beobachtet sie die ganze Zeit.

⁹ Lenski beginnt mit Onegin zu streiten und beschuldigt ihn, sich an Olga heranzumachen. Onegin versucht ihn zu beruhigen, aber Lenski ist mit Vernunft nicht beizukommen. Er fordert Onegin zum Duell. Madame Larina ist empört: In ihrem Haus!

¹⁰ Lenski erinnert sich an die glücklichen Tage, die er früher in Larinas Haus verbrachte. Tatjana ist entsetzt bei dem Gedanken, daß Onegin getötet werden und für immer für sie verloren sein könnte, während Olga, Larina und die versammelte Gesellschaft die jungen Männer dafür rügen, daß sie so blind und impulsiv handeln. Onegin bereut sein Vorgehen insgeheim.

¹¹ Er nimmt Lenskis Herausforderung jedoch an, um ihm eine Lehre dafür zu erteilen, daß er Harmlosigkeiten derart töricht mißdeutet.

2. Szene

Eine Wassermühle am Ufer eines Waldbaches. Es ist früher Morgen, die Sonne ist grade erst aufgegangen.

¹² Orchestervorspiel.

¹³ Sarezki, Lenskis Sekundant, wartet ungeduldig auf Onegin und fragt sich, ob dieser sich verirrt hat.

¹⁴ Lenski ist von düsteren Vorahnungen erfüllt; er fühlt, daß er in dem Duell sein Leben lassen wird. Es gedenkt seiner Jugendtage und seiner Liebe zu Olga.

¹⁵ Onegin erscheint mit seinem Diener

¹⁶ Während ihre Sekundanten sich beraten, unternehmen Onegin und Lenski einen letzten aussichtslosen Versuch zur Versöhnung. Im darauffolgenden Duell wird Lenski getötet.

Dritter Akt

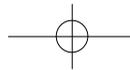
1. Szene

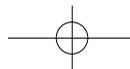
Mehrere Jahre später: Fürst Gremins Palais in St. Petersburg

¹⁷ Die Gäste tanzen eine Polonaise und bilden dann kleinere Gruppen, um sich zu unterhalten.

¹⁸ Onegin ist nach mehreren Jahren ruheloser Wanderfahrten, auf denen er seiner Vergangenheit zu entkommen suchte, nach St. Petersburg zurückgekehrt. Er kann jedoch noch immer nicht vergessen, daß er den einzigen Freund tötete, den er je schätzte und dessen Bild ihn noch immer ständig heimsucht. Die anderen Gäste äußern sich über seine düstere Erscheinung.

¹⁹ Ecossoise.





²⁰ Fürst Gremin tritt mit seiner Gattin, die niemand anderer als Tatjana ist, ein. Onegin erkennt sie, allerdings nicht ohne Schwierigkeiten, denn sie hat sich von einem einfachen Provinzmädchen zu einer würdigen Fürstin gewandelt. Tatjana erkundigt sich nach dem Fremden, der sich inzwischen mit ihrem Gatten unterhält. Es gelingt ihr, ihre Erregung zu verbergen, als sie Onegins Namen hört.

²¹ Der nicht mehr junge Fürst Gremin erzählt Onegin von der tiefen Liebe, die er für seine junge Gattin empfindet, und davon wie sie sein sonst unergiebiges Dasein von Grund auf veränderte.

²² Onegin und Tatjana werden von Fürst Gremin miteinander bekannt gemacht und bestätigen flüchtig ihre frühere Bekanntschaft.

²³ Als Tatjana den Ball verläßt, sinnt Onegin über die Veränderungen nach, die ihr widerfahren sind. Er bereut nun, daß er sie einmal abwies, ist von neuer Leidenschaft entflammt und beschließt, ihr seine Liebe zu offenbaren.

2. Szene

Ein Zimmer im Palais des Fürsten Gremin, am nächsten Morgen

²⁴ Orchestervorspiel

²⁵ Tatjana hat einen Brief von Onegin erhalten, in dem er ihr seine Gefühle für sie offenbart. Weinend erinnert sie sich daran, was sie einmal für ihn empfand. Onegin tritt ein und erfleht ihr Erbarmen.

²⁶ Tatjana trocknet ihre Tränen und erinnert Onegin an ihr erstes Treffen und daran, wie kalt – und ihrer Ansicht nach grausam – er ihre jugendlichen Liebeserklärungen aufgenommen hatte. Ihr ist nun bewußt, wie recht er damals hatte, denn sie war tatsächlich naiv und simpel gewesen. Liebt er sie jetzt bloß, weil sie reich ist und Beziehungen in höheren Kreisen hat?

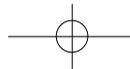
²⁷ Trotz Onegins Beteuerungen wird sie nicht schwach.

²⁸ Sie ist zwar einen Augenblick lang versucht, der Liebe nachzugeben, die erneut in ihrem Herzen aufzuflammen beginnt, aber sie muß ihrem Gatten die Treue halten.

²⁹ Sie bittet Onegin zu gehen. Dann eilt sie aus dem Zimmer und läßt den von Verzweiflung überwältigten Onegin über sein erbärmliches Schicksal nachgrübelnd zurück.

© Ewan West

Übersetzung: Johanna Mayr



Mit ihrem sensationellen Debüt als Gräfin in *Le nozze di Figaro* am Royal Opera House, Covent Garden wurde **Kiri Te Kanawa** praktisch über Nacht zur Legende. Sie rückte rasch an die Spitze der internationalen Oper auf und gehört heute zu den berühmtesten Sopranistinnen der Welt. Zum Zeitpunkt ihres ersten Opernauftritts hatte sie bereits Erfahrung als eine Konzert- und Schallplattenkünstlerin gesammelt, die vor der Kamera ebenso in ihrem Element war wie auf der Bühne. Mit zunehmender Reife als Recitalsängerin ist sie heute in den verschiedensten musikalischen Gattungen eine der gefragtesten Interpretinnen.

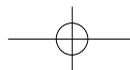
Kiri Te Kanawa ist ein gern gesehener Gast in den führenden Opernhäusern der Welt – ob in London (Covent Garden), New York (Met), Chicago (Lyric Opera), Paris, Sydney, Wien, Mailand, San Francisco, München, Köln oder Verona. Sie verkörpert die drei großen lyrischen Sopran-Heldinnen von Richard Strauss (*Arabella*, die Marschallin und die Gräfin in *Capriccio*), Mozarts *Fiordiligi*, Donna Elvira, Pamina und Gräfin Almaviva, Verdis *Violetta*, Amelia *Boccanegra* und *Desdemona*, Puccinis *Tosca*, Mimi und *Manon Lescaut*, die Rosalinde von Johann Strauss und Tschairowsky

Tatjana sowie Bizets *Micaela* und Gounods *Marguerite*.

Zu ihren vielbeachteten Schallplattenaufnahmen gehören Gesamteinspielungen von *Don Giovanni*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Così fan tutte*, *Die Zauberflöte* und *Tosca*, *La rondine* und *Manon Lescaut* sowie *Simon Boccanegra*, *Arabella*, *Otello*, *La traviata*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Faust*, *Carmen*, *Capriccio* und *La bohème*, aber auch Sammlungen von Arien aus dem französischen, italienischen und deutschen Opernrepertoire.

Kiri Te Kanawa wurde 1982 als Dame Kiri in den britischen Adelsstand erhoben und 1995 in der Queens Birthday Honours List mit dem begehrten Order of New Zealand ausgezeichnet.

Die Vielseitigkeit und das breite Leistungsspektrum des amerikanischen Starbaritons **Thomas Hampson** im Bereich von Oper und Lied, Studioarbeit und Musikwissenschaft sind unumstritten. Seine internationale Karriere hat ihn auf die berühmtesten Opern- und Konzertbühnen der Welt geführt und zu einem der angesehensten, innovativsten und begehrtesten Solisten unserer Zeit gemacht. Seine Liebe zum Lied findet nicht nur in seiner Lehrtätigkeit



Ausdruck, sondern auch in seiner Repertoireforschung und der Entwicklung von Multimediaprojekten, wie *Voices from the Heart*, einer Performance-Dokumentation über die Musik von Stephen Foster für den Hessischen Rundfunk und Arte.

Die Opernrollen Hampsons sind breit gefächert – von Rossini über Verdi bis Puccini und von Monteverdi über Britten bis Henze. Großen Anklang fand er in neuerer Zeit mit den Titelrollen in *Guillaume Tell* (Wien), *Eugen Onegin* (Wien und Paris), *Hamlet* von Ambroise Thomas (Monte Carlo und San Francisco) und in der selten gehörten Baritonversion von Massenets *Werther* (New York); er überzeugte als Père Germont in *La traviata* (Zürich), als Rodrigue, Marquis von Posa, in der französischen Originalversion von Verdis *Don Carlos* (Paris, London, Edinburgh), als Wolfram in Wagners *Tannhäuser* (Zürich), als Busonis *Doktor Faust* (Salzburg) und Szymanowskis *König Roger* (Birmingham). Für die Saison 2000/2001 standen für ihn *Doktor Faust* (New York), *Hamlet* (Paris) sowie *Eugen Onegin*, *Guillaume Tell*, *Die lustige Witwe* und *Linda di Chamounix* (Wien) und – zum erstenmal überhaupt – Oreste in Glucks *Iphigénie en Tauride* in Salzburg auf dem Programm. Fast alle Schallplattenaufnahmen

Hampsons sind mit Auszeichnungen gewürdigt worden, darunter sechs *Grammy*-Nominierungen und drei *Gramophone Awards*.

Der vielseitige amerikanische Tenor **Neil Rosenshein** ist für seine unvergesslichen Bühnendarstellungen ebenso bekannt wie für seine intelligente Musikalität. Der Erfolg begleitet ihn in Opernhäusern und Konzertsälen, mit einem Repertoire von Komponisten des Barock bis in das 20. Jahrhundert.

In der Saison 2000/2001 singt Neil Rosenshein den Herodes in *Salome* mit der Milwaukee Symphony und Tichon in *Katja Kabanowa* an der Houston Grand Opera. Sein Debüt an der Met gab er als Alfredo in *La traviata*, bevor er dort die Titelrolle in Gounods *Faust*, den Prinzen in einer Neuinszenierung von *Rusalka*, die Titelrolle in *Peter Grimes* und sowohl Alfred als auch Eisenstein in der *Fledermaus* sang. Als Spezialisten im französischen Repertoire hat man ihn an der Met in der Titelrolle von *Werther* erlebt, und als *Don José* ist er mit der Met in the Parks in *Carmen* aufgetreten. Er hat an allen namhaften Opernhäusern der Vereinigten Staaten gastiert.

Seine Europaverpflichtungen haben Neil

Rosenshein nach Covent Garden (Lenski in *Eugen Onegin* und Steva in *Jentfa*), an die Pariser Opéra und die Hamburger Staatsoper (Alfredo), nach Zürich (Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), an die Opéra de Lausanne (Cavaradossi und Werther), das Grand Théâtre de Genève (Tom Rakewell in *The Rake's Progress*) und die Niederländische Oper (Titelrollen in *Don Carlos* und Zemlinskys *Der Zwerg*) geführt. Außerdem ist er in Essen, Bonn, Brüssel, Lissabon, Lille, Nizza, Marseille, Toulouse, Lyon und an der New Israeli Opera aufgetreten. In Japan hat er den Lenski beim Pacific Music Festival und den Solotenor in Beethovens *Neunter* bei einem Friedenskonzert in Hiroshima gesungen.

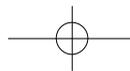
John Connell studierte am Royal Northern College of Music bei Patrick McGuigan und am National Opera Studio. Er debütierte an der English National Opera als Ramphis in *Aida* und sang im Jahr darauf als Erster Baß des Ensembles. Inzwischen tritt er regelmäßig als Gastsänger an der English National Opera auf, wo man ihn als Commendatore (*Don Giovanni*), Colline (*La bohème*), Mönch (*Don Carlos*), Erste Stimme (Busonis *Doktor Faust*), Ferrando (*Il trovatore*), Leporello (*The Stone*

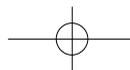
Guest), Alter Sträfling (*Lady Macbeth von Mtsensk*), Basilio (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Dansker (*Billy Budd*), Banquo (*Macbeth*), Pogner (*Die Meistersinger*) und Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*) erlebt hat. Er hat auch für die Royal Opera und Opera North gesungen.

Zu seinen Schallplattenaufnahmen gehören *Peter Grimes* (für Chandos), *Billy Budd*, *Elijah*, Szymanowskis *Stabat Mater* und Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music*. Für die BBC hat er an einer Rundfunkaufnahme der Studiooper *The Burglers of Calais* mitgewirkt. Er hat in Konzertaufführungen von der *Walküre* in Spanien, Sarastro mit der Welsh National Opera und Padre Guardiano (*La forza del destino*) mit der English National Opera gesungen.

Nicolai Gedda gilt international als einer der größten Sänger unserer Zeit. Er beherrscht ein weit gespanntes Repertoire, in dem fast alle Stilrichtungen und Epochen von Oper und Oratorium, Operette, Lied und Orchesterwerk vertreten sind.

Der gebürtige Schwede (er entstammt einer russisch-schwedischen Familie) debütierte 1952 an der Königlichen Oper in Stockholm in *Le Postillon de Longjumeau*. 1953 trat er erstmals





an der Mailänder Scala auf, 1954 an der Pariser Opéra und 1957 an der Met (in der Titelrolle von Gounods *Faust*). In Covent Garden, wo er 1965 als Herzog von Mantua in Verdis *Rigoleto* debütierte, sang er später auch Benvenuto Cellini, Alfredo, Gustavo III. in der Originalfassung von *Un ballo in maschera*, Nemorino und Lenski. Er schuf Hauptrollen in Barbers *Vanessa* und Menottis *The Last Savage* an der Metropolitan Opera.

Seine Operntriumphe reichen von der Welt Haydns und Mozarts bis zu Strawinski, Orff, Barber und Menotti; zugleich gilt er als herausragender Liedinterpret. Nicolai Gedda hat mit fast allen großen internationalen Dirigenten der letzten 35 Jahre zusammengearbeitet, darunter Beecham, Bernstein, Giulini, Klemperer und Solti. Mit 200 Schallplattenaufnahmen verfügt er auch über die umfangreichste Diskographie eines Tenors. Hierzu zählen Gesamteinspielungen von *Guillaume Tell*, *La bohème*, *Faust*, *Werther*, *Manon*, *Così fan tutte* und *Benvenuto Cellini*.

Nicolai Gedda gastierte vor kurzem mit einem hochehrgeordneten Opern- und Operettenabend am Royal Opera House und kehrte wenig später mit einer Neuinszenierung von Pfitzners *Palestrina* nach Covent Garden zurück.

Die in Dublin geborene **Patricia Bardon** machte auf sich aufmerksam, als sie aus dem ersten internationalen Sängerwettbewerb "Singer of the World" in Cardiff siegreich hervorging. Seitdem hat sie sich als Opern- und Konzertsängerin in aller Welt etabliert.

Sie hat die Arsace (*Semiramide*) in La Fenice in Venedig gesungen, die Titelrolle in *La Cenerentola* an der Monnaie in Brüssel, die Titelrolle in *Carmen* an der Hamburger Staatsoper, Welsh National Opera und Scottish Opera, die Penelope (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) am Maggio Musicale in Florenz und in Athen mit Trevor Pinnock, die Titelrolle in Händels *Orlando* in New York, Paris, Lyon, Straßburg und Montpellier mit William Christie und Les Arts Florissants, Smeton (*Anna Bolena*) in San Francisco, Amastris (*Serse*) an der Münchner Staatsoper mit Ivor Bolton sowie in Dresden und Montpellier, Juno (*Semele*) in Innsbruck mit René Jacobs, die Titelrolle in *Tamerlano* bei den Festspielen von Beaune, Helen (*King Priam*) an der Vlaamse Oper in Antwerpen und die Dritte Dame (*Die Zauberflöte*) in Verona. Außerdem hat man sie in *Guillaume Tell*, *Mosè in Egitto*, *Rigoleto*, *La fanciulla del West* und *Meistofele* in Covent Garden sowie in zahlreichen Rollen an der Opera North,

Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera, English National Opera und in Glyndebourne erlebt. In ihrem Terminkalender stehen künftige Auftritte an der Chicago Lyric Opera, dem Maggio Musicale mit Zubin Mehta, der Münchner Staatsoper, der English National Opera und in Amsterdam.

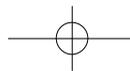
Mit ihrem umfangreichen und weit gespannten Konzertrepertoire ist Patricia Bardon an der Scala, in Madrid, Brüssel, Berlin, bei den Festspielen von Edinburgh und Montreux, in Cincinnati und Tokio aufgetreten. Unter ihren Schallplattenaufnahmen sind *Orlando*, *Elijah*, Erda (*Das Rheingold*) für Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation), Amastris (*Serse*), und *Rigoleto* hervorzuheben.

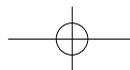
Richard Van Allan ist einer der herausragenden Baßbaritone Großbritanniens. Als Mitglied der English National Opera hat er dort viele berühmte Rollen gesungen und ist darüber hinaus in Covent Garden, an der Opera North, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Welsh National Opera und Scottish Opera aufgetreten. Außerdem ist er Leiter des National Opera Studio. Seine Auslandsverpflichtungen haben ihn an die New Yorker Met, die Pariser Opéra, das

Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, nach San Diego, Miami und Seattle geführt. Neben vielen anderen Rollen hat er Massenets *Don Quichotte* (English National Opera und Victoria State Opera), Theseus (*The Fairy Queen*), Basilio, Alter Mann (*King Priam*; Oper von Flandern und ENO) sowie Don Jerome (*La Dueña*, Opera North) gesungen.

Richard Van Allan hat zahlreiche Schallplatten vorgelegt, u.a. Mozarts *Così fan tutte* mit Montserrat Caballé, Janet Baker und Ileana Cotrubas unter der Leitung von Sir Colin Davis, *Don Giovanni* mit Bernard Haitink, Raleigh (Brittens *Gloriana*) mit Sir Charles Mackerras, *Billy Budd* und –für Chandos – Roberto Gerhards *La Dueña*.

Linda Finnie wurde in Schottland geboren und studierte an der Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama und an der Royal Academy of Music. Sie hat für alle namhaften britischen Operngesellschaften gesungen – so für die English National Opera die Brangäne (*Tristan und Isolde*), Eboli (*Don Carlos*), Amneris (*Aida*), Ortrud (*Lohengrin*) und Ulrica (*Un ballo in maschera*) und für die Royal Opera, Covent Garden die Waltraute (*Götterdämmerung*). Außerdem ist sie in Paris, Genf, Frankfurt, Flandern, Lille, Nizza,





Wien, Tokio, Singapur, Australien, Neuseeland und bei den Bayreuther Festspielen aufzutreten.

Linda Finnie hat zahlreiche Schallplatten-aufnahmen für Chandos gemacht, darunter Werke von Bliss, Diepenbrock, Korngold und Respighi sowie Zyklen von Mahler-Liedern, *Elijah*, Elgars *Sea Pictures* und *The Light of Life* sowie Prokofjews *Iwan der Schreckliche* (ausgezeichnet mit dem Deutschen Schallplattenpreis).

Elizabeth Bainbridge wurde in Lancashire geboren und hat an der Guildhall School of Music and Drama studiert. Sie gab 1964 ihr Royal Opera Covent Garden Debüt in der *Walküre* und trat im folgenden Jahr dort ins Ensemble ein. Zu ihren Partien gehören *Mistress Quickly*, Suzuki, Amneris, Emilia, Erda, Arvidson, Filipjewna, She-Ancient (*The Midsummer Marriage*), die alte Buryjovká (*Jenůfa*) und Auntie (*Peter Grimes*). Sie hat mit der Royal Opera am Teatro alla Scala gastiert (1976), außerdem in Südkorea und Japan (1979), beim Olympic Arts Festival in Los Angeles (1984) und beim Athener Festival 1985. Zu ihren Aufnahmen zählen *Norma*, *Les Troyens*, *Das schlaue Füchslein*, *Dido and Aeneas* und *The Midsummer Marriage*.

Das **Orchester der Welsh National Opera** wurde 1970 gegründet. Seitdem hat es sich zu einem der besten Orchester Großbritanniens entwickelt, das für seine herausragende Leistung in einem breiten Opernrepertoire ebenso berühmt ist wie für seine Konzertauftritte und Schallplattenaufnahmen.

Unter der musikalischen Leitung von Richard Armstrong (1973 bis 1986) baute das Orchester ein vielseitiges Opernrepertoire auf. Auf diese Zeit geht auch die Zusammenarbeit mit Reginald Goodall zurück. 1987 übernahm Sir Charles Mackerras die musikalische Leitung, und das Orchester widmete sich verstärkt der Studioarbeit. Zuvor hatte man bereits unter der Leitung von Richard Bonyngge mehrere Operngesamt-aufnahmen mit Joan Sutherland, Montserrat Caballé, Pavarotti und anderen weltberühmten Sängern eingespielt. Mit Mackerras nahm das Orchester Janáčeks *Osud* (CHAN 3019) auf. Seit 1992 liegt die musikalische Leitung bei Carlo Rizzi. 1995 wurde das Orchester der Welsh National Opera in der Kategorie Großes Ensemble mit dem Musikpreis der Royal Philharmonic Society ausgezeichnet.

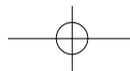
Der **Chor der Welsh National Opera** existiert seit 1968. Er machte sich schnell

einen Namen und fand mit seinen Opern- und Konzertdarbietungen breiten Anklang, nicht nur im traditionellen Repertoire, wie Verdi, sondern auch mit Werken des 20. Jahrhunderts, wie Tippetts *A Midsummer Marriage* und Janáčeks *Aus einem Totenhaus*. Der Chor hat viele Opern aufgenommen, darunter *Andrea Chénier* mit Riccardo Chailly, *Tristan und Isolde* und *Parsifal* mit Reginald Goodall, *I masnadieri*, *Norma*, *Hamlet*, *Ernani*, *Anna Bolena* und *Adriana Lecouvreur* mit Richard Bonyngge, *Tosca* mit Georg Solti und *Rigoletto*, *Faust* und *Un ballo in maschera* mit Carlo Rizzi sowie *The Mikado*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Yeomen of the Guard*, Brittens *Gloriana* und Janáčeks *Osud* mit Mackerras. Unter den aufgenommenen Konzertstücken sind *Sea Drift* von Delius, *The Vigil of Venus* von George Lloyd und *Hiawatha* von Coleridge-Taylor hervorzuheben.

Sir Charles Mackerras wurde 1925 als Kind australischer Eltern in den USA geboren und studierte in Sydney und Prag. Sein Debüt als Operndirigent feierte er in Sadler's Wells Opera, wo er wesentlichen Anteil an der Produktion der sensationellen britischen Erstaufführung von Janáčeks *Katja Kabanowa*

hatte, die dazu führte, daß Janáčeks Werke ihren Weg ins britische Standardrepertoire fanden. Er war Chefdirigent an der Hamburger Oper (1966–69) und Musikdirektor an der Oper von Sadler's Wells, der nachmaligen English National Opera (1970–77) sowie der Welsh National Opera (1987–91), wo unter anderem seine bemerkenswerten Janáček-Inszenierungen große Beachtung fanden. Die Inszenierung und Einspielung von *Osud* wurden von der Peter Moores Foundation gefördert. Sir Charles Mackerras ist Ehrendirigent des Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Emeritus-Dirigent der Welsh National Opera, erster Gastdirigent der San Francisco Opera und seit der Spielzeit 1998/99 Musikdirektor des Orchestra of St Luke's in New York. Er arbeitet seit vielen Jahren mit der Royal Opera, Covent Garden zusammen und dirigiert regelmäßig Aufführungen an der Metropolitan Opera, New York.

Sir Charles Mackerras hat sich intensiv mit der Aufführungspraxis des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts befaßt, was seine musikalischen Interpretationen wesentlich beeinflusste. Seine beeindruckende Diskographie umfaßt den preisgekrönten Zyklus der Opern Janáčeks mit den Wiener



Philharmonikern, Brittens *Gloriana* und Dvořák's *Rusalka* (beide ausgezeichnet mit einem *Gramophone* award), die Sinfonien von Beethoven, Brahms und Mahler sowie Handels *Giulio Cesare* und Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda* mit der English National Opera (für Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

Sir Charles Mackerras wurde 1974 mit dem CBE ausgezeichnet und 1979 für seine Verdienste um die Musik geadelt. Außerdem erhielt er die Verdienstmedaille der Tschechischen Republik, den Chopin-Preis und wurde zum Mitglied des Order of Australia ernannt.



St Petersburg: The Winter Palace (1856) by A.H. Payne

AKG London

Alexander Pushkin



AKG London

Tchaïkovski: Eugène Onéguine

Comme il est agréable d'éviter la routine de tous ces pharaons, princesses éthiopiennes, coupes empoisonnées et tout le restant de ces histoires d'automates. Il y a tant de poésie dans *Onéguine!*

Voici ce qu'écrivit Tchaïkovski à son frère Modeste en Mai 1877, tandis que le compositeur commençait à travailler à son nouvel opéra, *Eugène Onéguine*.

C'était la chanteuse Elizaveta Lavrovskaja qui lui avait récemment suggéré au cours d'une réception d'envisager de baser un opéra sur le "roman en vers" de Pouchkine. La réaction initiale de Tchaïkovski, comme celle de la plupart de ses amis et connaissances, fut d'abord défavorable et il fut tenté de rejeter sur le champ l'idée d'*Eugène Onéguine* pour se concentrer plutôt sur deux autres suggestions plus prometteuses, *Othello* de Shakespeare et *Cinq-mars* d'Alfred de Vigny. L'œuvre de Pouchkine était assurément bien trop subtile et jouissait d'une considération bien trop élevée dans les cercles littéraires pour qu'il osât lui faire subir un traitement d'opéra, particulièrement du fait de tout le respect des conventions artificielles que cela supposerait. De plus, à première vue, l'œuvre ne semblait

en aucun cas contenir une action suffisante pour soutenir une œuvre théâtrale complète, car l'histoire sur laquelle Pouchkine avait bâti ses vers élégants était ténue. Néanmoins, en l'espace de quelques jours, le compositeur fut prompt à changer d'avis et à reconnaître qu'en définitive, le manque de qualités dramatiques du poème pouvait être surmonté par la "richesse de sa poésie" à laquelle s'ajoutaient son "humanité" et sa "simplicité". Il était avant tout sûr de pouvoir produire à l'opéra une version d'*Eugène Onéguine* qui compléterait véritablement l'œuvre sur laquelle elle était basée, plutôt que d'en détruire le caractère essentiel, s'attirant ainsi l'opprobre des nombreux admirateurs de Pouchkine. Bien qu'il ne réussit pas entièrement sur ce plan – Tourgueniev, par exemple, trouva beaucoup à critiquer dans le libretto – on reconnaît généralement de nos jours que, avec *Eugène Onéguine*, Tchaïkovski produisit à la fois son propre chef d'œuvre à l'opéra et une des contributions les plus durables apportées au répertoire russe du dix-neuvième siècle.

Une fois que son intérêt fut éveillé, Tchaïkovski fut impatient de se mettre au

travail: une seule nuit blanche lui suffit pour effectuer l'ébauche de scénario complet qu'il présenta le lendemain à son ami Constantin Chilovski, lui demandant d'en faire un libretto aussi rapidement que possible. Dès le début, Tchaïkovski sentit qu'il lui faudrait adopter une démarche essentiellement radicale si le projet devait réussir, fait qu'il prit un soin particulier à expliquer à Chilovski. Plus que toute autre chose, il voulait éviter les conventions déshumanisantes régissant l'opéra de son époque, qui, lui semblait-il, ne pourraient faire valoir la fécondité du texte de Pouchkine. Fait révélateur, il se dispensa bientôt complètement des services de Chilovski, prenant lui-même en main la mise en forme du libretto afin d'obtenir une œuvre qu'il devait décrire, avec une précision caractéristique, comme un ensemble de "scènes lyriques en trois actes".

Bien que ce ne fût pas le premier opéra de Tchaïkovski – il avait déjà travaillé à plusieurs projets qui n'avaient pas abouti, y compris une mise en musique de *Baris Godounov* de Pouchkine, un traitement de la légende d'*Ondine*, sans oublier un opéra historique *Opritchnik*, et ce qu'il appela plus tard son "brillant échec", *Vakoula le forgeron* (révisé plus tard sous le nom de *Tchérvitchki*) – il ne s'était

jusqu'alors jamais identifié si étroitement avec aucun de ses projets dramatiques. Dans une certaine mesure, il est peut-être possible d'expliquer ce fait par la prise de conscience croissante qui fut la sienne que sa musique serait le véhicule qui lui permettrait de fournir le pendant idéal du style narratif sophistiqué de Pouchkine, cet élément de l'original, qui, contrairement à la substance dramatique, ne pouvait être directement transplanté sur la scène d'opéra. Néanmoins, dès ses premières lectures du texte de Pouchkine, il avait été très profondément touché par l'épisode dans lequel Tatiana passe la nuit assise à écrire une déclaration d'amour aussi impulsive qu'innocente à Onéguine pour voir ses avances cruellement rejetées lors de leur rencontre du matin suivant. C'est en effet avec l'intention de faire de ce passage (dont une partie fournit la base de la célèbre "scène de la lettre") le centre d'où jaillissent les émotions de l'opéra que Tchaïkovski ébaucha son scénario. Le passage devait bientôt prendre une signification bien plus personnelle.

Inspiré comme il l'était manifestement par l'image de Tatiana, amoureuse éconduite, il est à peine surprenant que, après avoir produit son scénario, Tchaïkovski eût lieu de reconsidérer sa réaction vis à vis d'une lettre

d'amour non sollicitée qu'il avait reçue quelques semaines plus tôt d'une jeune étudiante du conservatoire. Pour le compositeur, la similarité existant entre sa propre position et celle du personnage central de son nouvel opéra sembla probablement une intervention directe du destin, force dont il était toujours prêt à prendre en compte les avertissements. Craignant de jouer le rôle d'Onéguine repoussant Tatiana, Tchaïkovski accepta d'épouser Antonio Milioukova, bien que, ayant depuis longtemps accepté ses penchants homosexuels, il refusât d'envisager toutes relations physiques avec sa future épouse. En l'occurrence, le mariage qui fut dûment célébré en juillet 1877 s'avéra à la fois bref et désastreux, plongeant le compositeur dans une dépression dont la gravité le poussa même à chercher la délivrance en tentant de se suicider, quelques deux mois plus tard.

La composition d'*Eugène Onéguine* prit donc place avec, à l'arrière plan, de graves difficultés personnelles qui, bien que minant l'énergie du compositeur, ne parvinrent jamais à le détourner totalement du projet en cours. Sa guérison, lorsqu'elle survint, fut en grande partie due à l'amitié récente qui l'unissait à Nadezhda von Meck, la mystérieuse veuve qui en devenant sa protectrice, fut en mesure de

lui apporter à la fois une aide matérielle et la stimulation intellectuelle qui lui était vitale. Leurs relations qui furent entièrement menées par voie épistolaire et ne donnèrent jamais lieu à une rencontre devaient à partir de ce moment-là devenir une des forces créatrices les plus importantes de la vie de Tchaïkovski, fait qu'il reconnut de manière touchante dans la dédicace qu'il donna à la Symphonie no 4 datant de cette époque, qui porte la mention "A ma meilleure amie". Pendant tout le cours de l'année 1877 et le début de l'année 1878, tandis qu'il voyageait tour à tour en Suisse, en France, en Italie et en Autriche afin de reprendre des forces, il continua à travailler à l'opéra, tenant Nadezhda von Meck au courant de ses progrès, jusqu'à ce que finalement, en février 1878, à la suite d'un dernier débordement d'activité fiévreuse, il fut en mesure d'annoncer l'achèvement de celui-ci.

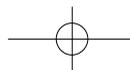
Tchaïkovski consacra alors son énergie à faire les arrangements nécessaires à la mise en scène d'*Eugène Onéguine*. De même qu'il avait manifesté le désir ardent d'ouvrir de nouvelles voies par la façon dont il avait abordé la construction du libretto et sa mise en musique, il avait aussi à tâche d'insuffler une vitalité et une fraîcheur nouvelles à sa représentation.

Dès le début, il savait qu'idéalement sa partition exigerait des chanteurs affichant un calibre différent de celui qui était facilement trouvé dans les opéras de l'empire. "Où trouverai-je la Tatiana que Pouchkine a imaginée et que j'ai essayée de dépeindre en musique?" écrivit-il. "Avec quelle vulgarité le portrait captivant dépeint par Pouchkine sera-t-il rendu, quand il sera transféré à la scène, avec ses conventions, ses traditions dénuées de sens, ses vétérans des deux sexes qui acceptent sans la moindre honte des rôles de jouvencelles de seize ans et de petits jeunets."

Une solution se présenta avec les élèves du Conservatoire de Moscou qui, le pensait Tchaïkovski, seraient peut-être plus aptes à se charger de sa partition que les chanteurs de formation conventionnelle. En conséquence, il s'était mis en contact avec son ami Rubinstein, le directeur du Conservatoire, au début du mois de novembre 1877, pour lui demander d'organiser la mise en scène d'une partie de l'opéra, à savoir la totalité du premier acte et la première partie du second. Rubinstein qui douta initialement de la sagesse de ce plan, craignant qu'il ne porte un préjudice durable à la carrière de Tchaïkovski, finit néanmoins par accepter et la répétition générale d'une version tronquée eut lieu au

conservatoire en décembre 1878. Le 29 mars 1879, Rubinstein dirigea la représentation de la totalité de l'œuvre au théâtre Mali, avec parmi les effectifs, un chœur d'étudiants et un orchestre qui en était aussi constitué en grande partie. Bien que le traitement donné par Tchaïkovski à l'œuvre de Pouchkine fût décrié dans certains milieux, son nouvel opéra gagna l'approbation de la majorité des critiques. Deux années plus tard, le 23 janvier 1881, *Eugène Onéguine* reçut sa première mise en scène entièrement professionnelle au théâtre Bolchoï de Moscou. A la suite de cela, il gagna bientôt une place permanente au sein du répertoire des compagnies de l'Europe entière.

Si l'on prend en considération l'agitation avec laquelle Tchaïkovski aborda d'abord le sujet de son opéra, le succès d'*Eugène Onéguine* paraît encore plus remarquable. Il est peut-être possible d'attribuer ceci en partie à sa partition, qui montre avec abondance le niveau élevé d'invention mélodique, couleur et lyrisme, auquel le public russe avait fini par s'attendre de la part du compositeur. Néanmoins, *Eugène Onéguine* révèle aussi le sens dramatique certain de son compositeur: sa transformation d'un récit byronien en une pièce de théâtre musical pleine d'effet lui confère une place au premier rang des



compositeurs d'opéra. Il faut avant tout rendre dûment justice au don infaillible qu'avait Tchaïkovski de savoir ce qui allait ou non faire de l'effet sur scène. Le fait d'avoir choisi d'articuler la composition de son opéra autour d'un certain nombre d'épisodes qu'il avait sélectionnés dans le poème de Pouchkine s'avérait une stratégie pleine de risques, car il avait par cela changé d'un seul coup le caractère fondamentalement narratif de l'original. Néanmoins, ce que Tchaïkovski se montra prompt à voir, fut que cette manière de procéder, grâce à laquelle l'attention se trouve fermement centrée sur les moments de l'histoire où les sentiments atteignent leur comble, comme le rejet de Tatiana par Onéguine et les adieux de Lenski au monde, allait donner à son opéra un attrait vraiment universel. Tout comme les grands opéras de Mozart et de Verdi, *Eugène Onéguine* fait bien plus que de se contenter de ne présenter qu'une série d'événements par les voies de l'opéra: au lieu de cela, il s'attache surtout à dépeindre des personnages vraiment humains faisant preuve d'actions et de sentiments avec lesquels le public est en mesure de s'identifier étroitement. En ce sens, Tchaïkovski surpasse même ce que Pouchkine parvient à accomplir, car une grande partie de

la subtilité du poème ne peut être appréciée que par ceux qui sont au courant de la tension insidieuse qui existait entre société urbaine et société rurale dans la Russie du dix-neuvième siècle, tandis que l'opéra a un attrait qui a survécu au fil des générations et a su traverser les barrières nationales.

Bien que ce fût la réaction de Tchaïkovski vis à vis de l'œuvre de Pouchkine qui détermina le caractère essentiel de son opéra, il faut aussi mentionner à juste titre les nombreuses autres influences qui vinrent peser sur l'œuvre. Tout comme dans sa musique orchestrale, il resta plus proche des traditions de l'Europe occidentale que beaucoup de ces contemporains, tels que Balakirev et Cui, qui choisirent au contraire de suivre une ligne "slavophile" pleine de défi. Ainsi, dans ses opéras, une grande partie de l'inspiration se trouve puisée dans des œuvres extérieures au répertoire russe. En ce qui concerne *Eugène Onéguine*, la découverte qu'il fit de *Carmen* de Bizet lors d'une visite à Paris en 1876 s'avéra très féconde: Modeste nous dit que l'opéra fut "une des impressions musicales les plus fortes de sa vie", en bien que les deux opéras aient des intrigues très différentes, ils appartiennent aux mêmes sphères du monde des émotions. Toute aussi

importante peut-être fut la visite que Tchaïkovski fit à Bayreuth en 1876 à l'occasion de la première de *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Bien que l'influence qu'ait eu Wagner sur sa musique soit difficile à retracer, il est peut-être significatif qu'*Eugène Onéguine* fasse une utilisation plus marquante des motifs de réminiscence que ne le font ses opéras plus anciens.

Sans aucun doute, l'influence musicale la plus importante à marquer Tchaïkovski fut néanmoins celle de l'opéra de tradition indigène qui s'était développé dans le pays au cours des quatre décennies qui avaient précédé, à la suite de la présentation d'*Une Vie pour le tsar* de Glinka en 1836. Le caractère russe du poème de Pouchkine se trouve rendu par l'adaptation consciente que fait Tchaïkovski d'un grand nombre de caractéristiques propres à l'opéra de style national: le chœur rustique des moissonneurs de l'Acte I a par exemple de nombreux pendants, tout comme les danses caractéristiques comme la polonaise de l'Acte III. Néanmoins, entre les mains de Tchaïkovski, ces traits particuliers sont utilisés à des fins bien différentes, car *Eugène Onéguine* est bien davantage un opéra réaliste à la manière de *La traviata* de Verdi, qu'il n'est une œuvre de l'Ecole nationaliste. Tandis que les éléments

russe apportent une contribution énorme à la vitalité de l'opéra, le but essentiel de ce dernier reste néanmoins de retracer le développement d'une histoire d'amour tragique dont la signification a une portée aussi universelle qu'éternelle, une signification que commentateurs et public n'ont cessée de comprendre depuis des générations.

© Ewan West

L'argument

COMPACT DISC 1

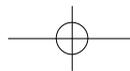
Premier acte

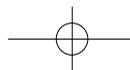
□ Introduction

Scène 1

La campagne, le jardin de la propriété de la famille Larin, un soir vers la fin de l'été Madame Larina fait des confitures avec l'aide de Filipievna, nourrice de la famille

□ Venant de la maison, en entend les voix des deux sœurs Larina, Tatiana et Olga, qui chantent un chant folklorique racontant l'histoire d'un berger amoureux. Ceci réveille chez Madame Larina des souvenirs dont elle fait part à





Filipievna, ceux de ses amours de jeunesse et celui de son mariage qui fut finalement arrangé par sa famille.

³ Un groupe de paysans arrive, épuisés par leur labeur dans les champs. Leur chef offre une gerbe de blé décorée à Madame Larina pour symboliser la bonne fin de la récolte.

⁴ A la demande de celle-ci, les paysans marquent l'occasion en exécutant une danse accompagnée d'un chant célébrant la moisson. Alors qu'ils racontent l'histoire de la fille d'un meunier et la manière dont elle a repoussé les avances d'un fermier riche mais volage, Tatiana et Olga sortent pour les écouter.

⁵ Les réactions manifestées par les deux sœurs vis à vis du chant folklorique montrent leur différence de caractère. Pour la plus introvertie, Tatiana, le chant évoque des aspirations indéterminées, tandis qu'il donne tout simplement envie de danser à Olga, la plus extravertie.

⁶ Reprenant les paroles des paysans, Olga chante son insouciance et son appétit effréné pour la vie.

⁷ Tandis que les paysans s'en vont, Madame Larina et Filipievna demandent à Tatiana pourquoi elle a l'air si bouleversé, pensant que la jeune fille doit être malade. Elle leur répond néanmoins que c'est l'émouvante histoire

d'amour qu'elle est en train de lire qui lui fait cet effet.

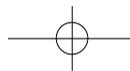
⁸ Lenski, le jeune propriétaire terrien qui courtise Olga depuis quelque temps arrive en compagnie d'un nouveau voisin, son ami Eugène Onéguine.

⁹ Tandis qu'Onéguine questionne Lenski au sujet de Tatiana, elle révèle que son arrivé a éveillé en elle des désirs soudains. Olga n'est pas lente à s'apercevoir du changement d'humeur de sa sœur.

¹⁰ Olga et Lenski se déclarent leur amour. Onéguine engage une conversation polie et plutôt empruntée avec Tatiana, lui demandant comment elle peut être heureuse dans ce milieu rural qui offre si peu de distractions mondaines. Elle lui répond qu'elle passe son temps à lire et à rêver, ce qui révèle la nature essentiellement romantique de son tempérament.

¹¹ Tandis qu'Onéguine et Tatiana s'éloignent, Lenski donne libre cours à ses sentiments pour Olga qui lui rend la pareille avec effusion.

¹² A la tombée de la nuit, Madame Larina sort pour inviter les jeunes gens à souper. Onéguine escorte Tatiana dans la maison sous le regard de Filipievna. La nourrice pense déceler que la jeune fille dont elle a la charge est tombée amoureuse de leur nouveau visiteur.



Scène 2

La chambre de Tatiana plus tard ce soir-là

¹³ Introduction.

¹⁴ Filipievna dit à Tatiana que c'est l'heure de se coucher.

¹⁵ Tout en se préparant pour la nuit, Tatiana questionne Filipievna sur son passé.

¹⁶ A-t-elle jamais été amoureuse? Une fois que la nourrice lui a raconté l'histoire de son lugubre mariage, Tatiana lui fait part de ses émotions tumultueuses.

¹⁷ Demeurée seule, Tatiana va s'asseoir à son bureau et commence à écrire une lettre à Onéguine. Après des débuts hésitants, elle donne libre cours aux sentiments qu'elle éprouve pour lui.

¹⁸ C'est son cœur, écrit-elle qui l'a poussée à déclarer son amour. Si elle n'avait jamais rencontré le jeune homme, elle aurait peut-être pu un jour en épouser un autre.

¹⁹ Se levant de son bureau, elle se rend compte qu'il ne pourra jamais y en avoir un autre.

²⁰ Elle l'a toujours aimé.

²¹–²² Elle se remet à sa lettre implorant Onéguine de la délivrer du tourment auquel elle se trouve réduite.

²³ Au point du jour, la lettre est terminée. Filipievna vient réveiller Tatiana.

²⁴ La jeune fille demande à la nourrice de lui accorder une faveur, ce que cette dernière accepte.

²⁵ Tatiana lui confie sa déclaration d'amour en lui demandant de veiller à ce qu'elle soit remise à Onéguine.

Scène 3

Les terres de la famille Larin, le jour suivant

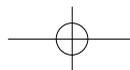
²⁶ Un groupe de jeunes paysannes chantent en ramassant des baies.

²⁷ Tatiana paraît très émue à la nouvelle qu'Onéguine soit venu la voir: elle regrette déjà son action impulsive.

²⁸ Il lui parle avec quelque froideur, car, bien que sa lettre ait réveillé en lui des émotions anciennes, il se montre surpris qu'elle écrive si ouvertement à quelqu'un qu'elle ne connaît que relativement peu.

²⁹ Onéguine lui dit que s'il avait eu l'intention de mener une vie consacrée au bonheur domestique, il n'aurait pu espérer trouver partenaire plus digne que Tatiana. Il ne se sent néanmoins plus destiné à se marier et se croit incapable de payer de retour la dévotion de la jeune fille.

³⁰ Tandis que les jeunes paysannes continuent de chanter leur air joyeux, Onéguine conseille à Tatiana de maîtriser ses sentiments et



d'attendre la venue d'un époux plus indiqué.

COMPACT DISC 2

Deuxième acte

Scène 1

La salle de bal de la demeure de Madame Larina, au mois de janvier suivant. Un bal est donné en l'honneur de Tatiana dont c'est la fête

[1] On joue une valse.

[2] Les invités, dont beaucoup sont des propriétaires terriens voisins, expriment le grand plaisir qu'ils éprouvent à cette occasion que amène un agréable changement à leur routine normale.

[3] Onéguine, que Lenski a amené, danse avec Tatiana. Ce qui donne lieu à des commentaires, car la compagnie le juge indigne de Tatiana du fait de sa personnalité déplaisante et de mauvaise vie notoire.

[4] Onéguine, qui entend leurs commentaires, décide de punir Lenski de l'avoir persuadé d'assister au bal et se met en tête de danser avec Olga.

[5] Lenski, jaloux de l'attention qu'Olga accorde à Onéguine, accuse cette dernière de flirter avec lui. Olga, qui ne se montre

qu'enjouée, dit à Lenski qu'il est ridicule de faire tant d'histoires à propos d'une danse innocente, mais, cherchant à le provoquer davantage, elle accepte encore une fois de danser avec Onéguine.

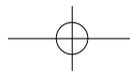
[6]-[7] Monsieur Triquet, le Français, chante quelques couplets qu'il a écrits en l'honneur de Tatiana.

[8] On annonce la danse suivante: une mazurka. Onéguine danse une fois avec Tatiana avant de la reconduire à sa place, et pendant tout ce temps là, Lenski ne les perd pas du regard.

[9] Lenski commence à sa quereller avec Onéguine, l'accusant de faire des avances déplacées à Olga. Onéguine tente de le calmer, mais Lenski est hors de lui. Il provoque Onéguine en duel. Madame Larina est consternée de voir une telle chose arriver chez elle.

[10] Lenski se remémore les journées heureuses qu'il a passées dans la demeure de Madame Larina. Tatiana est horrifiée à l'idée qu'Onéguine puisse se faire tuer et à l'idée de le perdre à jamais, tandis qu'Olga, Madame Larina et la compagnie assemblée reprochent aux jeunes gens d'agir avec tant d'aveuglement et de manière si impulsive. Onéguine regrette secrètement d'avoir agi ainsi.

60



[11] Il accepte néanmoins le défi de Lenski, pensant lui donner une leçon pour s'être mépris d'une façon si ridicule sur ses actions innocentes.

Scène 2

Un moulin situé sur les bords d'une rivière au milieu des bois. Il est tôt le matin et le soleil vient seulement de se lever.

[12] Introduction

[13] Zaretski, le témoin de Lenski, demande où se trouve Onéguine, le pensant perdu.

[14] Lenski, plein de pressentiments, sent qu'il va être tué au cours de ce duel. Il se remémore sa jeunesse et son amour pour Olga.

[15] Onéguine arrive, n'amenant pour témoin qu'un serviteur.

[16] Tandis que le témoins s'entretiennent, Onéguine et Lenski font une dernière vaine tentative de réconciliation. Dans le duel qui s'ensuit, Lenski est tué.

Troisième acte

Scène 1

Plusieurs années plus tard, la demeure du prince Gremine à Saint-Petersbourg

[17] Les invités dansent une polonaise, avant de se séparer pour converser en petits groupes.

[18] Onéguine est revenu à Saint-Petersbourg après avoir passé plusieurs années stériles à errer de par le monde, tentant d'échapper à son passé. Mais il lui est toujours impossible d'oublier qu'il a tué le seul ami dont il ait jamais fait cas et dont le spectre le hante toujours constamment. Les autres invités commentent sur sa lugubre présence.

[19] Ecossaise

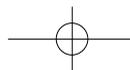
[20] Le prince Gremine entre accompagné de sa femme, qui n'est autre que Tatiana. Onéguine la reconnaît, bien qu'avec difficulté, car elle a changé, la jeune provinciale s'est transformée en digne princesse. Tatiana s'enquière de l'étranger qui est maintenant en train de parler à son époux et, en entendant le nom d'Onéguine, commence à trembler d'émotion.

[21] Le prince Gremine qui est assez âgé fait part à Onéguine de l'amour profond qu'il ressent pour la jeune femme qu'il a nouvellement épousée, et lui dit à quel point ce sentiment a transformé son existence autrement sans intérêt.

[22] Onéguine et Tatiana que le prince Gremine présente l'un à l'autre font pendant un court instant allusion au fait qu'ils se sont autrefois connus.

[23] Lorsque Tatiana se retire, Onéguine médite sur les changements qui l'ont transformée.

61



Regrettant maintenant de l'avoir autrefois rejetée, il est rempli d'une ardeur nouvelle et décide de lui déclarer son amour.

Scène 2

Une pièce de la demeure de prince Greminé le matin suivant

²⁴ Introduction

²⁵ Tatiana a reçu une lettre d'Onéguine dans laquelle il lui fait part des sentiments qu'il éprouve à son égard. En sanglots, elle se remémore ce qu'elle ressentait autrefois pour lui. Onéguine arrive implorant sa pitié.

²⁶ Essayant ses larmes, Tatiana rappelle à Onéguine leur première rencontre et avec quelle froideur – une froideur qu'elle ressentit comme cruelle – il reçut les témoignages d'amour de l'adolescente qu'elle était. Elle se rend maintenant compte à quel point il avait raison, car elle était en effet trop naïve et simple. L'aime-t-il maintenant à cause de sa richesse et de sa position sociale?

²⁷ Malgré les protestations d'Onéguine, Tatiana ne faiblit pas.

²⁸ Bien qu'elle soit tentée de céder à l'amour qui commence à se réveiller dans son cœur, elle doit rester fidèle à son mari.

²⁹ Elle supplie Onéguine de partir. Tandis qu'elle s'enfuit de la pièce, Onéguine,

submergé par le désespoir, contemple la tristesse de son destin.

© Ewan West

Traduction: Marianne Fernée

Kiri Te Kanawa devint célèbre presque du jour au lendemain après ses débuts sensationnels dans le rôle de la Comtesse dans *Le nozze di Figaro* au Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Elle se retrouva vite parmi l'élite de l'opéra international et devint l'une des sopranos les plus célèbres dans le monde. A l'époque de ses débuts lyriques, elle avait déjà beaucoup travaillé en concert et en studio et se sentait tout aussi à l'aise devant les caméras que sur la scène. Aujourd'hui, alors qu'elle continue de développer sa carrière d'artiste de récital, elle reste très demandée dans les contextes musicaux les plus variés.

Kiri Te Kanawa se produit fréquemment dans les plus grands théâtres lyriques du monde – Covent Garden, le Metropolitan Opera, le Chicago Lyric Opera, l'Opéra de Paris, le Sydney Opera House, l'Opéra d'état de Vienne, La Scala, les opéras de San Francisco, Munich, Cologne et de Vérone. Son répertoire de soprano lyrique comprend les trois grandes héroïnes de Richard Strauss

(Arabella, la Maréchale et la Comtesse dans *Capriccio*), les rôles mozartiens de Fiordiligi, Donna Elvira, Pamina et de la Comtesse Almaviva; les rôles de Violetta, Amelia et Desdémone chez Verdi, ceux de Tosca, Mimi et Manon Lescaut chez Puccini; elle a été la Rosalinde de Johann Strauss, la Tatiana de Tchaïkovski, la Micaëla de Bizet et la Marguerite de Gounod.

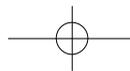
On lui doit plusieurs enregistrements illustres, entre autres d'opéras complets: *Don Giovanni*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Così fan tutte*, *La Flûte enchantée* et *Tosca*, *La rondine*, *Manon Lescaut* ainsi que *Simon Boccanegra*, *Arabella*, *Othello*, *La traviata*, *Le Chevalier à la rose*, *Faust*, *Carmen*, *Capriccio* et *La bohème*. Elle a aussi enregistré des anthologies d'arias d'opéras français, italiens et allemands.

Kiri Te Kanawa s'est vue conférer le titre de Dame en 1982 et a reçu en 1995 l'Ordre de Nouvelle-Zélande.

Thomas Hampson, le plus grand baryton américain du moment, doit sa réputation à la diversité et l'ampleur de ses succès à l'opéra, en récital, au disque et dans le domaine de la recherche. Sa carrière internationale l'a conduit dans les théâtres et les salles de concert les plus prestigieux du monde et il est l'un des

solistes les plus respectés, les plus innovateurs et les plus demandés de sa génération. Sa passion du chant l'a poussé non seulement à enseigner mais aussi à explorer le répertoire et à concevoir des projets multimédia comme *Voices from the Heart*, un spectacle documentaire sur la musique de Stephen Foster pour Hessischer Rundfunk und Arte.

Le répertoire lyrique de Hampson est extrêmement varié et va de Rossini à Verdi et Puccini, de Monteverdi à Britten et Henze. Il a récemment triomphé dans les rôles-titres de *Guillaume Tell* (Vienne), d'*Eugène Onéguine* (Vienne et Paris), de *Hamlet* d'Ambroise Thomas (Monte Carlo et San Francisco) et dans une version pour baryton rarement montée du *Werther* de Massenet (New York). Il a également été Giorgio Germont dans *La traviata* (Zürich), le marquis de Posa dans la version française originale de *Don Carlos* de Verdi (Paris, Londres, Edinbourg), Wolfram dans *Tannhäuser* de Wagner (Zürich) et chanté dans *Le Docteur Faust* de Busoni (Salzbourg) et *Le Roi Roger* de Szymanowski (Birmingham). Au programme de sa saison 2000/2001, on retrouve entre autres *Le Docteur Faust* (New York), *Hamlet* (Paris) ainsi qu'*Eugène Onéguine*, *Guillaume Tell*, *La Veuve joyeuse* et *Linda di Chamounix* à Vienne et pour la première fois le



rôle d'Oreste dans *Iphigénie en Tauride* de Gluck à Salzbourg.

La plupart des enregistrements de Hampson ont été primés, méritant entre autres six nominations aux *Grammy Awards* et trois *Gramophone Awards*.

Le ténor américain **Neil Rosenshein** est réputé autant pour la diversité de ses talents, ses représentations mémorables sur la scène que pour sa maturité musicale. Aussi à l'aise sur la scène lyrique que dans la salle de concert, il possède un répertoire allant du baroque au XXe siècle.

Au programme de sa saison 2000 / 2001, Neil Rosenshein a inscrit Hérode dans *Salomé* avec le Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra ainsi que Tikhon dans *Katia Kabanova* avec le Houston Grand Opera. Il fit ses débuts au Metropolitan Opera dans le rôle d'Alfredo dans *La traviata* et retrouva cette scène dans le rôle-titre du *Faust* de Gounod, sous les traits du Prince dans une nouvelle mise en scène de *Roussalka*, dans le rôle-titre de *Peter Grimes* ainsi qu'en tant qu'Alfred et Eisenstein dans *La Chauve-souris*. Spécialiste du répertoire français, il a également tenu au Met le rôle-titre de *Werther* et interprété Don José dans *Carmen* dans le cadre des concerts en plein air

du Met (Met in the Parks). Il a été invité à chanter sur les plus grandes scènes lyriques des Etats-Unis.

En Europe, Neil Rosenshein a chanté au Royal Opera, Covent Garden (Lenski dans *Eugène Onéguine* et Steva dans *Jentia*), à l'Opéra de Paris et à l'Opéra d'état de Hambourg (Alfredo), à l'Opéra de Zürich (Belmont dans *L'Enlèvement au sérail*), à l'Opéra de Lausanne (Cavaradossi et Werther), au Grand Théâtre de Genève (Tom Rakewell dans *Le Libertin*) et au Netherlands Opera dans les rôles-titres de *Don Carlo* et de *Der Zwerg* de Zemlinsky. Il s'est également produit à Essen, Bonn, Bruxelles, Lisbonne, Lille, Nice, Marseille, Toulouse, Lyon ainsi qu'avec le New Israeli Opera. Au Japon, il a été Lenski avec le Pacific Music Festival, interprétant par ailleurs la partie de ténor solo dans la Neuvième Symphonie de Beethoven lors d'un Concert pour la Paix donné à Hiroshima.

John Connell fit ses études au Royal Northern College of Music avec Patrick McGuigan ainsi qu'au National Opera Studio. Il fit ses débuts avec l'English National Opera dans le rôle de Ramfis dans *Aïda* avant de devenir première basse de la compagnie l'année suivante. Il a été régulièrement invité à chanter en soliste avec

l'English National Opera où il fut entre autres le Commandeur (*Don Giovanni*), Colline (*La bohème*), le moine (*Don Carlos*), la Première voix (*Le Docteur Faust* de Busoni), Ferrando (*Le Trouvère*), Leporello (*L'Invité de pierre*), le vieux forçat (*Lady Macbeth de Mtsensk*), Don Basile (*Le Barbier de Séville*), Dansker (*Billy Budd*), Banquo (*Macbeth*), Pogner (*Les Maîtres-chanteurs*) et Sarastro (*La Flûte enchantée*). Il a également chanté pour le Royal Opera et Opera North.

Il a enregistré entre autres *Peter Grimes* (pour Chandos), *Billy Budd*, *Elijah*, le *Stabat Mater* de Szymanowski et *Serenade to Music* de Vaughan Williams. Pour BBC Radio, il a enregistré un opéra studio, *Les Bourgeois de Calais*. John Connell a également participé à une version de concert de *La Walkyrie* en Espagne, tenu le rôle de Sarastro avec le Welsh National Opera et celui du Père Guardianio (*La Force du destin*) avec l'English National Opera.

Nicolai Gedda est reconnu dans le monde entier comme l'un des plus grands artistes de notre temps. Il maîtrise un répertoire recouvrant presque tous les styles de musique et toutes les époques, qu'il s'agisse d'opéra, d'oratorio, de mélodies ou d'œuvres orchestrales.

Né en Suède de père russe et de mère

suédoise, il fit ses débuts professionnels à l'Opéra royal de Stockholm en 1952 dans *Le Postillon de Longjumeau*. Il chanta pour la première fois à La Scala de Milan en 1953, à l'Opéra de Paris en 1954 et au Metropolitan Opera (dans le rôle-titre du *Faust* de Gounod) en 1957. Depuis ses débuts avec le Royal Opera en 1965 (dans le rôle du Duc de Mantoue dans *Rigetto* de Verdi), il a incarné sur cette scène Benvenuto Cellini, Alfredo, Gustave III dans *Un Bal masqué*, Nemorino et Lensky. Il créa les rôles principaux de *Vanessa* de Barber et du *Dernier sauvage* de Menotti au Metropolitan Opera.

Ses triomphes lyriques vont de Haydn et Mozart jusqu'à Stravinsky, Orff, Barber et Menotti, tandis qu'en récital il est réputé pour son interprétation remarquable des Lieder. Nicolai Gedda a travaillé avec la plupart des grands chefs d'orchestre du monde durant les trente-cinq dernières années, comme Beecham, Bernstein, Giulini, Klemperer et Solti. Il peut aussi se vanter d'être le ténor le plus enregistré au monde, avec deux cents enregistrements à son actif. Parmi ceux-ci, notons l'intégrale de *Guillaume Tell*, *La bohème*, *Faust*, *Werther*, *Manon*, *Così fan tutte* et *Benvenuto Cellini*.

Nicolai Gedda a récemment triomphé au

Royal Opera House dans un concert d'airs d'opéra et d'opérette ainsi que dans une nouvelle mise en scène de *Palestrina* de Pfitzner.

Native de Dublin, **Patricia Bardon** marqua le monde musical lorsqu'elle fut primée au tout premier Concours international de chant de Cardiff. Elle est considérée aujourd'hui comme l'une des plus grandes interprètes internationales à l'opéra et en concert.

Sur la scène lyrique, elle a été Arsace (*Sémiramis*) à La Fenice à Venise, a tenu le rôle-titre de *Cendrillon* au Théâtre de la Monnaie à Bruxelles, celui de *Carmen* pour l'Opéra d'état de Hambourg, le Welsh National Opera et Scottish Opera, Pénélope (*Le Retour d'Ulysse*) au Mai Musical de Florence ainsi qu'à Athènes avec Trevor Pinnock, le rôle-titre d'*Orlando* de Haendel à New York, Paris, Lyon, Strasbourg et Montpellier avec William Christie et *Les Arts Florissants*, Smeton (*Anne Boleyn*) à San Francisco, Amastre (*Xerxès*) pour l'Opéra d'état de Munich avec Ivor Bolton ainsi qu'à Dresde et Montpellier, Junon (*Sémélé*) à Innsbruck avec René Jacobs, le rôle-titre de *Tamerlan* au Festival de Beaune, Hélène (*Le Roi Priam*) pour Der Vlaamse Oper à Anvers

et la Troisième Dame de la nuit (*La Flûte enchantée*) à Vérone. Elle a aussi chanté dans *Guillaume Tell*, *Moïse en Égypte*, *Rigoletto*, *La Fille du far-west* et *Méphistophélès* pour le Royal Opera House, Covent Garden ainsi que de nombreux rôles pour Opera North, le Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera, l'English National Opera et Glyndebourne. Elle doit prochainement se produire au Chicago Lyric Opera, au Mai musical de Florence avec Zubin Mehta, avec l'Opéra d'état de Munich, l'English National Opera et à Amsterdam.

Patricia Bardon a un vaste répertoire de concert qu'elle a interprété à La Scala, à Madrid, Bruxelles, Berlin, aux Festivals d'Édimbourg et de Montreux, à Cincinnati et à Tokyo. Parmi ses enregistrements, notons *Orlando*, *Elijah*, Erda (*L'Or du Rhin* pour Chandos en collaboration avec la Fondation Peter Moores), Amastre (*Xerxès*) et *Rigoletto*

Richard Van Allan est l'un des barytons-basses les plus éminents de Grande-Bretagne. Membre de l'English National Opera, il a tenu de nombreux rôles principaux et s'est produit à Covent Garden, avec Opera North, le Glyndebourne Festival Opera, le Welsh National Opera et Scottish Opera. Il est également directeur du National Opera

Studio. Sa carrière lyrique internationale l'a mené au Metropolitan Opera à New York, à l'Opéra de Paris, au Teatro Colon à Buenos Aires, à San Diego, Miami et Seattle. Il a chanté entre autres le rôle-titre de *Don Quichotte* de Massenet (pour l'English National Opera et le Victoria State Opera) et les rôles de Thésée (*La Reine des fées*), Don Basile, le vieil homme (*Le Roi Priam* pour l'Opéra des Flandres et l'English National Opera) et Don Jérôme (*La Duègne* pour Opera North).

Parmi les enregistrements de Richard Van Allan, notons *Così fan tutte* avec Montserrat Caballé, Janet Baker et Ileana Cotrubas sous la direction de Sir Colin Davis, *Don Giovanni* avec Bernard Haitink, *Gloriana* de Britten (où il tient le rôle de Raleigh) avec Sir Charles Mackerras, *Billy Budd* et, pour Chandos, *La Duègne* de Roberto Gerhard.

Originaire d'Écosse, **Linda Finnie** fit ses études à la Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama et à la Royal Academy of Music. Elle s'est produite avec toutes les grandes compagnies lyriques de Grande-Bretagne, notamment avec l'English National Opera dans les rôles de Brangäne (*Tristan et Isolde*), Eboli (*Don Carlos*), Amnérís (*Aïda*), Ortrud

(*Lohengrin*) et Ulrica (*Un Bal masqué*) ainsi qu'avec le Royal Opera dans celui de Waltraute (*Le Crépuscule des Dieux*). Sa carrière internationale l'a menée à Paris, Genève, Francfort, dans les Flandres, à Lille, Nice, Vienne, Tokyo, Singapour ainsi qu'en Australie, en Nouvelle-Zélande et au Festival de Bayreuth.

Linda Finnie a réalisé de nombreux enregistrements pour Chandos, entre autres d'œuvres de Bliss, Diepenbrock, Korngold et Respighi, ainsi que des cycles de mélodies de Mahler, *Elijah*, *Sea Pictures* et *The Light of Life* d'Elgar sans oublier *Ivan le Terrible* de Prokofiev (qui fut primé en Allemagne).

Elizabeth Bainbridge est née dans le comté de Lancashire, et a fait ses études à la Guildhall School of Music and Drama de Londres. Elle fit ses débuts au Royal Opera Covent Garden dans *Die Walküre* en 1964, et entra dans la compagnie l'année suivante. Ses rôles furent Mistress Quickly, Suzuki, Amneris, Emilia, Erda, Arvidson, Filipievna, une Ancienne (*The Midsummer Marriage*), Grand-mère Buryja (*Jenůfa*) et Auntie (*Peter Grimes*). Elle s'est produite avec le Royal Opera au Teatro alla Scala de Milan en 1976,

en Corée du Sud et le Japon en 1979, à l'Olympic Arts Festival de Los Angeles en 1984, et au festival d'Athènes en 1985. Parmi ses enregistrements figurent *Norma*, *Les Troyens*, *Le Petit renard rusé*, *Dido and Aeneas* et *The Midsummer Marriage*.

L'**Orchestre du Welsh National Opera** fut fondé en 1970. Il figure parmi les meilleurs orchestres britanniques, apprécié non seulement pour ses interprétations superbes dans un vaste répertoire lyrique mais aussi pour son travail en concert et ses enregistrements.

Sous la direction de Richard Armstrong, directeur musical de 1973 à 1986, l'orchestre développa un large répertoire lyrique. C'est à cette époque que Reginald Goodall travailla pour la première fois avec l'ensemble. Sir Charles Mackerras devint directeur musical en 1987 et développa considérablement le programme d'enregistrements de l'orchestre. Avant 1987, plusieurs intégrales d'opéras avaient été gravées sous la direction de Richard Bonyngge, avec Joan Sutherland, Montserrat Caballé et Pavarotti à la tête de distributions de carrure internationale. Sous Mackerras, l'orchestre enregistra *Osud* de Janáček (CHAN 3019). Carlo Rizzi est

directeur musical depuis 1992. En 1995, l'Orchestre du Welsh National Opera remporta le Prix de musique de la Royal Philharmonic Society, dans la catégorie "Grands ensembles".

Le **Chœur du Welsh National Opera** commença sa carrière professionnelle en 1968. Sa réputation crut rapidement et l'ensemble est salué dans le monde entier pour son travail à l'opéra et en concert, non seulement dans le répertoire traditionnel comme Verdi mais aussi dans celui du XXe siècle avec des œuvres comme *Le Mariage de la mi-été* de Tippett et *Souvenirs de la maison des Morts* de Janáček. Le Chœur a enregistré de nombreux opéras dont *Andrea Chénier* avec Riccardo Chailly, *Tristan et Isolde* et *Parsifal* avec Reginald Goodall, *Les Brigands*, *Norma*, *Hamlet*, *Henani*, *Anne Boleyn* et *Adrienne Lecouvreur* avec Richard Bonyngge, *Tosca* avec Georg Solti et *Rigoletto*, *Faust* et *Un Bal masqué* avec Carlo Rizzi. Le Chœur a aussi enregistré *The Mikado*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Yeomen of the Guard*, *Gloriana* de Britten et *Osud* de Janáček avec Mackerras. Parmi les pièces de concert, il a enregistré *Sea Drift* de Delius, *The Vigil of Venus* de George Lloyd et *Hiawatha* de Coleridge-Taylor.

Sir Charles Mackerras naquit en 1925 aux Etats-Unis de parents australiens et fit ses études à Sydney et Prague. Il fit ses débuts de chef lyrique au Sadler's Wells Opera, où il contribua à la première britannique de *Katya Kabanova* de Janáček, une création sensationnelle qui assura à Janáček de figurer au répertoire des troupes britanniques. Il fut Chef d'orchestre principal de l'Opéra de Hambourg (1966–1969) et directeur musical du Sadler's Wells Opera (qui deviendrait l'English National Opera) entre 1970 et 1977 et du Welsh National Opera entre 1987 et 1991, où ses productions remarquables de Janáček entre autres furent accueillies avec enthousiasme. La production et l'enregistrement d'*Osud* ont été financés par la Peter Moores Foundation. Il est Chef d'orchestre honoraire du Scottish Chamber Orchestra et du Welsh National Opera, l'un des chefs réguliers de San Francisco Opera et, depuis la saison 1998–1999, directeur de l'Orchestra of St Luke's à New York. Il est associé depuis de nombreuses années avec le

Royal Opera de Covent Garden à Londres, et dirige régulièrement au Metropolitan Opera de New York.

Sir Charles Mackerras a fait des recherches poussées sur l'interprétation aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles qui ont profondément influencé la façon dont il aborde le répertoire aujourd'hui. Sa vaste discographie comprend un cycle primé des opéras de Janáček avec la Philharmonie de Vienne, *Gloriana* de Britten et *Rusalka* de Dvořák (primés tous les deux par la revue *Gramophone*), des symphonies de Beethoven, Brahms et Mahler, et avec l'English National Opera *Giulio Cesare* de Handel et *Maria Stuarda* de Donizetti (pour Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

Sir Charles Mackerras est Commander of the British Empire (CBE) depuis 1974 et a été anobli en 1979 pour services rendus à la musique. Il s'est vu également décerner la Médaille du mérite de la République tchèque, le Prix Chopin et le titre de Companion of the Order of Australia.

Čajkovskij: Eugenio Onieghin

Che piacere non avere a che fare con i noiosi Faraoni, le principesse etiopi, i calici avvelenati e tutti i racconti sulle bambole automatiche.

Quanta poesia c'è in *Onieghin*.

Così scriveva Čajkovskij a suo fratello Modest nel maggio del 1877, mentre iniziava a lavorare alla sua nuova opera, *Eugenio Onieghin*.

Era stata la cantante Elizaveta Lavrovskaya, nel corso di una festa, a suggerirgli di prendere in considerazione il “poema narrativo” di Puškin come base per un'opera. All'inizio Čajkovskij reagì negativamente, come la maggiore parte dei suoi amici e conoscenti, e fu tentato di respingere sommariamente l'idea di *Eugenio Onieghin* e concentrarsi invece su due alternative più promettenti: l'*Otello* di Shakespeare e *Cinq-mars* di Alfred de Vigny. L'opera di Puškin era troppo raffinata e godeva di grandissimo rispetto nei circoli letterari perché egli osasse sottoporla a un trattamento operistico, con tutta l'aderenza alle artificiali convenzioni che ciò avrebbe comportato. Inoltre, a prima vista la trama appariva troppo debole per sostenere un'opera teatrale completa, perché la vicenda di base intorno alla quale Puškin aveva

intessuto i suoi versi eleganti era estremamente tenue. Nel giro di qualche giorno, però, il compositore cambiò idea e ammise che i difetti drammatici del poema potevano essere superati attraverso la “ricchezza della poesia” e la sua “umanità e semplicità”. Soprattutto, Čajkovskij era certo di poter realizzare una versione operistica dell'*Eugenio Onieghin* che veramente completasse il testo a cui si ispirava, piuttosto che distruggerne il carattere essenziale, suscitando in tal modo le ire dei tanti ammiratori di Puškin. L'operazione non riuscì completamente da questo punto di vista – Turgenev, per esempio, trovò molto da ridire sul libretto – però oggi per ammissione generale *Eugenio Onieghin* rappresenta il capolavoro lirico di Čajkovskij e uno dei più duraturi contributi al repertorio russo ottocentesco.

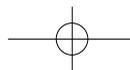
Una volta risvegliato il suo interesse, Čajkovskij non vide l'ora di mettersi al lavoro: l'intero canovaccio venne abbozzato durante un'unica notte insonne e il giorno dopo venne presentato all'amico Konstantin Shilovsky perché venisse trasformato in un libretto al

più presto possibile. Fin dall'inizio, Čajkovskij si era convinto che sarebbe stato necessario adottare un approccio radicale di base perché il progetto avesse successo, e cercò di sottolinearlo in maniera particolare con Shilovsky. Più che altro voleva evitare le convenzioni operistiche alienanti dei suoi tempi, che non avrebbero reso giustizia alle pagine piene di significato di Puškin. Ben presto fece a meno dei servigi di Shilovsky completamente e iniziò di persona a costruire il libretto per un'opera che avrebbe poi descritto, con caratteristica precisione, “scene liriche in tre atti”.

Non si trattava della prima opera di Čajkovskij; il compositore aveva già lavorato a diversi progetti rimasti incompiuti, comprese le musiche per il *Boris Godunov* di Puškin e una lettura della leggenda *Undine*, oltre allo storico *Oprichnik* e quello che più tardi definì il suo “brillante insuccesso”, *Vakula il fabbro* (in seguito riveduto per *Cherevichki*). Ma non si era mai prima identificato tanto da vicino con uno dei suoi progetti drammatici. Questo si potrebbe spiegare fino a un certo punto con la sua crescente consapevolezza di essere in grado di fornire, attraverso la sua musica, la controparte ideale al sofisticato stile narrativo di Puškin, quell'elemento dell'originale che, a

differenza della sua sostanza drammatica, non si poteva direttamente trapiantare sulla scena operistica. Tuttavia al suo primo contatto con il testo di Puškin era rimasto profondamente colpito dall'episodio in cui Tatiana rimane alzata per tutta la notte a scrivere la sua innocente e impulsiva dichiarazione d'amore a Onieghin, per vedere crudelmente respinte le sue proposte al loro incontro la mattina dopo. Čajkovskij abbozzò il suo canovaccio con l'intenzione che questo brano (parzialmente utilizzato come base della famosa “Scena della lettera”) costituisse il nucleo emotivo dell'opera. Ben presto esso avrebbe assunto un significato ancora più personale.

Poiché era stato talmente ispirato dalla figura della disprezzata Tatiana, dopo aver creato il suo canovaccio, Čajkovskij ebbe motivo di rivedere una sua reazione a una lettera d'amore spontanea che gli aveva inviato qualche settimana prima una giovane studentessa del Conservatorio. La somiglianza tra la propria posizione e quella del protagonista della sua nuova opera assumeva così l'aspetto di un intervento diretto del destino, e il compositore era sempre disposto a seguire i suoi ammonimenti. Nel timore di comportarsi come Onieghin nei confronti di Tatiana, Čajkovskij accettò di sposare Antonia



Miljakova anche se, avendo molto prima preso coscienza delle proprie tendenze omosessuali, non era disposto a prendere in considerazione alcun rapporto fisico con la futura sposa. Il matrimonio, doverosamente celebrato nel luglio del 1877, si rivelò disastroso e di breve durata, e fece piombare il compositore in una grave depressione da cui si sentì costretto a cercare sollievo con un tentativo di suicidio circa due mesi dopo.

La composizione di *Eugenio Onieghin* quindi si colloca su uno sfondo di gravi difficoltà personali; per quanto le due cose assorbono l'energia del compositore, non riuscirono mai a distoglierlo completamente dal progetto. La guarigione dall'esaurimento nervoso, quando venne, fu dovuta in gran parte alla recente amicizia con la misteriosa vedova Nadežda von Meck che divenne sua protettrice e riuscì ad offrirgli aiuto materiale, oltre che stimolo intellettuale. Il loro rapporto, sempre epistolare e mai personale, sarebbe stato da allora in poi una delle forze creative più significative della vita di Čajkovskij, come testimonia la commovente Quarta sinfonia, composta nello stesso periodo e dedicata alla "Mia migliore amica". Per tutto il 1877 e all'inizio del 1878, durante i suoi spostamenti in Svizzera, Francia, Italia e Austria per

recuperare le forze, il compositore continuò a lavorare all'opera, inviando dei resoconti a Nadežda von Meck, finché nel febbraio del 1878, in seguito a un ultimo sforzo frenetico di attività, fu in grado di annunciare che era stata terminata.

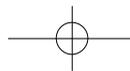
Adesso Čajkovskij rivolse le proprie energie ad organizzare l'allestimento teatrale dell'*Eugenio Onieghin*. Come era stato ansioso di imboccare nuovi sentieri nel suo approccio alla costruzione del libretto e al processo per musicarlo, così si preoccupò di infondere alla sua esecuzione una nuova freschezza e vitalità. Fin dall'inizio sapeva che idealmente la sua partitura avrebbe richiesto cantanti di calibro diverso rispetto a quelli facilmente disponibili nei teatri lirici imperiali. "Dove troverò la Tatiana ideata da Puškin e che ho cercato di descrivere in musica?", scrisse. "Come sarà volgare l'affascinante ritratto di Puškin quando sarà trasferito nel teatro con le sue convenzioni, le sue tradizioni senza significato, i suoi veterani di entrambi i sessi che assumono, senza alcuna vergogna, il ruolo di fanciulle sedicenni e giovanotti imberbi!"

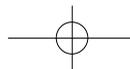
La soluzione prese le forme degli studenti del Conservatorio di Mosca, che secondo Čajkovskij sarebbero stati meglio in grado di affrontare la partitura rispetto ai cantanti con

una preparazione tradizionale. Così, all'inizio del novembre 1877, il compositore si rivolse al suo amico Rubinstein, direttore del Conservatorio, chiedendogli di organizzare un allestimento parziale dell'opera, cioè tutto il primo atto e la prima parte del secondo. Inizialmente, Rubinstein pensò che il progetto fosse poco saggio, temendo che avrebbe potuto danneggiare a lungo la reputazione di Čajkovskij. Alla fine comunque acconsentì e nel dicembre del 1878 fu rappresentata in prova generale una versione ridotta al Conservatorio. Il 29 marzo 1879, Rubinstein diresse una rappresentazione dell'opera completa al teatro Maly utilizzando un coro di studenti e un'orchestra formata prevalentemente da studenti; anche se il trattamento di Puškin da parte di Čajkovskij fu censurato in alcuni quartieri, in generale la nuova opera incontrò il favore della maggior parte dei critici. Due anni dopo, il 23 gennaio 1881, si svolgeva il primo allestimento professionale dell'*Eugenio Onieghin* al Bolsh'oj di Mosca, dopo di che ben presto si conquistò un posto fisso nel repertorio delle compagnie in tutta Europa.

Considerata la trepidazione con cui Čajkovskij si era accostato per la prima volta al soggetto di quest'opera, il successo di *Eugenio*

Onieghin è ancora più notevole. Il fenomeno si potrebbe forse attribuire in parte alla partitura, che riunisce gli elevati standard dell'invenzione melodica, il colore e il lirismo che ormai il pubblico russo si attendeva dal compositore; però l'*Eugenio Onieghin* rivela anche un compositore dal tocco drammatico sicuro, in grado di trasformare una narrazione di sapore byroniano in un efficace brano di teatro musicale che lo colloca tra i maggiori compositori operistici. Soprattutto, bisogna doverosamente riconoscere il senso infallibile di Čajkovskij in merito a quanto avrebbe avuto il dovuto effetto sulle scene. La scelta di impennare la sua opera intorno ad alcuni episodi scelti del poema di Puškin rappresentava una strategia rischiosa; in questo modo, con un sol colpo veniva modificato il carattere fondamentale narrativo dell'originale. Tuttavia, Čajkovskij si rese conto ben presto che questo approccio, che ferma saldamente l'attenzione sui momenti emotivi culminanti della storia, come la rinuncia a Tatiana da parte di Onieghin e l'addio di Lenski al mondo, avrebbe dato alla sua opera un respiro veramente universale. Come le grandi opere di Mozart e Verdi, *Eugenio Onieghin* non si limita a presentare una serie di eventi attraverso il mezzo dell'opera,





ma fa molto di più: la sua preoccupazione principale è ritrarre alcuni personaggi reali, alcuni sentimenti e azioni con cui il pubblico può identificarsi da vicino. In questo senso, Čajkovskij supera persino le vette di Puškin, perché gran parte delle sfumature del poema possono essere apprezzate solo da chi conosce la tensione insidiosa tra la città e la società rurale nella Russia dell'Ottocento, mentre l'opera ha una portata che supera i confini geografici e temporali.

Sebbene a determinare il carattere essenziale dell'opera fosse stata la reazione di Čajkovskij nei confronti di Puškin, bisogna riconoscere le tante altre influenze di cui risentì l'opera. Come nella sua musica orchestrale, in cui il compositore rimase vicino alle tradizioni dell'Europa occidentale più di tanti altri contemporanei, per esempio Balakirev e Cui, che invece scelsero di seguire provocatoriamente un sentiero filo-slavo, così nelle sue opere egli trasse grande ispirazione da opere estranee al repertorio russo. Per *Eugenio Onieghin*, il suo incontro con la *Carmen* di Bizet durante una visita a Parigi nel 1876 si rivelò fondamentale: Modest ci dice che fu "una delle più potenti impressioni musicali della sua vita", e sebbene le trame delle due opere siano molto diverse, alcuni panorami

emotivi sono simili. Altrettanto importante, forse, fu la visita di Čajkovskij a Bayreuth nel 1876 per la prima rappresentazione di *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Sebbene sia difficile da rintracciare l'influenza di Wagner nella sua musica, forse è significativo che *Eugenio Onieghin* faccia un uso più cospicuo e sviluppato dei motivi del ricordo rispetto alle sue opere precedenti.

Indubbiamente, l'influenza musicale più importante su Čajkovskij fu, comunque, la tradizione nazionale dell'opera che si era sviluppata nel suo paese nel corso dei precedenti quarant'anni, in seguito all'apparizione di *Una vita per lo zar* di Glinka nel 1836. La qualità russa del poema di Puškin si rispecchia nell'adattamento consapevole di Čajkovskij di molte delle caratteristiche dello stile nazionale dell'opera: il rustico Coro del Raccolto nell'Atto I, per esempio, ha molte controparti, come le caratteristiche danze, come la polacca dell'Atto III. Tuttavia, nelle mani di Čajkovskij, tali caratteristiche vengono utilizzate per un fine molto diverso, perché *Eugenio Onieghin* è un'opera molto più realistica alla maniera della *Traviata* di Verdi che un'opera della scuola nazionalistica. Mentre gli elementi russi danno un enorme contributo alla vivace atmosfera dell'opera, la sua

preoccupazione principale rimane lo svolgimento della tragica storia d'amore dal significato eterno e universale che non è andato perduto per le varie generazioni dei critici e del pubblico.

© Ewan West

Argomento

COMPACT DISC ONE

Atto I

1 Introduzione

Scena prima

Il giardino della tenuta di campagna Larin, una sera di fine estate. La Lärina sta preparando la marmellata, con l'auto della nutrice, Filippievna.

2 Si sentono, da fuori, le due figlie della possidente Lärina, Tatiana e Olga, che cantano un motivo popolare. È la storia di un pastorello che soffre d'amore e questo fa ricordare alla Lärina alcune sue storie d'amore giovanili precedenti al suo matrimonio combinato, di cui parla con Filippievna.

3 Arriva un gruppo di contadini, stanchi delle fatiche sui campi. Il loro capo offre un

fascio di grano alla signora Lärina come simbolo che il raccolto è stato finalmente completato.

4 Dietro sua richiesta, i contadini festeggiano con una danza e un canto della mietitura. Mentre raccontano la storia della figlia del mugnaio che respinge le profferte di un ricco e incostante agricoltore, Tatiana e Olga escono ad ascoltare.

5 Le due sorelle manifestano la diversità del proprio carattere nelle loro reazioni. Per Tatiana, più introspettiva, il canto evoca un desiderio indefinito; l'estroverta Olga, invece, si sente spinta a ballare.

6 Riprendendo le parole dei contadini, Olga canta del suo spirito spensierato e del suo amore per la vita.

7 Mentre i contadini escono, la Lärina e Filippievna chiedono a Tatiana il perché del suo aspetto infelice, temendo che si senta poco bene. La fanciulla risponde che è l'effetto della commovente storia d'amore che sta leggendo.

8 Arriva Lenski, giovane proprietario terriero che corteggia Olga da qualche tempo, e porta con sé un amico e nuovo vicino: Eugenio Onieghin.

9 Mentre Onieghin fa domande a Lenski su Tatiana, la fanciulla rivela che la sua apparizione ha risvegliato in lei improvvisi





desideri. Olga riconosce ben presto il cambiamento d'umore della sorella.

¹⁰ Olga e Lenski si dichiarano reciprocamente amore. Onieghin impegna Tatiana in una conversazione educata e piuttosto artificiale.

Le chiede come fa ad essere felice in campagna, un ambiente che offre così poche distrazioni sociali; lei risponde che passa il tempo a leggere e sognare, tradendo il suo temperamento essenzialmente romantico.

¹¹ Mentre Onieghin e Tatiana si allontanano, Lenski manifesta i suoi sentimenti per Olga, che sono caldamente ricambiati.

¹² Al cadere della sera, la Lârina esce per chiamare i suoi ospiti a tavola. Onieghin accompagna Tatiana a casa, osservato da Filippievna. La nutrice crede di intuire da alcuni indizi che la sua pupilla si è innamorata del nuovo visitatore.

Scena seconda

La camera da letto di Tatiana, più tardi, la stessa sera

¹³ Introduzione

¹⁴ Filippievna dice a Tatiana che è ora di andare a letto.

¹⁵ Mentre si prepara, Tatiana chiede a Filippievna di parlarle del passato.

¹⁶ È mai stata innamorata? Quando la nutrice

le racconta la storia del proprio triste matrimonio, Tatiana le parla dei suoi sentimenti e dei suoi turbamenti.

¹⁷ Rimasta sola, Tatiana si avvicina allo scrittoio e inizia a scrivere una lettera a Onieghin. Dopo qualche esitazione iniziale, gli rivela i suoi sentimenti per lui.

¹⁸ Il suo cuore la obbliga a dichiarargli il suo amore, scrive. Forse, se non l'avesse mai incontrato, con il tempo avrebbe sposato un altro uomo.

¹⁹ Alzandosi dallo scrittoio, si rende conto che non può esserci nessun altro.

²⁰ L'ha sempre amato.

²¹–²² Riprende a scrivere la lettera, implorando Onieghin di salvarla dal tormento a cui si è ridotta.

²³ Alle prime luci dell'alba la lettera è finita. Filippievna viene a svegliare Tatiana.

²⁴ La fanciulla le chiede un favore, e Filippievna acconsente.

²⁵ Tatiana le consegna la sua dichiarazione d'amore e le chiede di consegnarla a Onieghin.

Scena terza

La proprietà dei Larin il giorno dopo

²⁶ Un gruppo di contadine canta mentre raccoglie more.

²⁷ Appare Tatiana, preoccupata alla notizia

che Onieghin è venuto a trovarla: rimpiaange già la sua azione impulsiva.

²⁸ L'uomo le parla piuttosto freddamente, perché nonostante la lettera abbia riacceso in lui alcuni vecchi sentimenti, lo ha sorpreso la franchezza con cui la fanciulla si è rivolta a una persona relativamente sconosciuta.

²⁹ Se avesse deciso di condurre una vita di felicità domestica, le dice, non avrebbe potuto sperare di avere una compagna migliore di Tatiana. Ma non si sente più destinato al matrimonio e non pensa di poter ricambiare l'affetto di Tatiana.

³⁰ Mentre le contadine continuano a cantare il loro allegro motivo, Onieghin consiglia a Tatiana di esercitare maggiore autocontrollo e attendere che arrivi un consorte più adeguato.

COMPACT DISC DUE

Atto II

Scena prima

La sala da ballo nella casa della signora Lârina, il giorno successivo. È l'omonastico di Tatiana e in suo onore si svolge un ballo

¹ Si inizia con un valzer.

² Gli ospiti, molti dei quali sono dei possidenti, esprimono il loro piacere per

quest'occasione, un gradevole cambiamento rispetto alle normali abitudini.

³ Onieghin, che è arrivato con Lenski, danza con Tatiana. Questo suscita alcuni commenti: il gruppo lo considera indegno di Tatiana a causa del suo carattere sgradevole e le sue famigerate cattive abitudini.

⁴ Onieghin sente i loro commenti e, avendo deciso di punire Lenski per averlo trascinato al ballo, insiste per ballare con Olga.

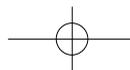
⁵ Geloso dell'attenzione rivolta da Olga a Onieghin, Lenski l'accusa di flirtare con lui. Olga, che invece si diverte, dice a Lenski che è sciocco da parte sua dare tanta importanza a un innocuo ballo, ma per indispettirlo accetta di ballare nuovamente con Onieghin.

⁶–⁷ Un vecchio insegnante francese, Monsieur Triquet, declama alcuni versi che ha composto in onore di Tatiana.

⁸ Viene annunciata la danza successiva: si tratta di una mazurka. Onieghin fa un giro con Olga e poi la accompagna a sedersi. Lenski non gli stacca gli occhi di dosso.

⁹ Lenski inizia a litigare con Onieghin, accusandolo di fare delle avances indesiderate a Olga. Onieghin tenta di calmarlo, ma Lenski ha perso il lume della ragione. Sfida Onieghin a duello. La Lârina è scandalizzata che tutto questo possa accadere sotto il suo tetto.





¹⁰ Lenski ricorda i giorni felici da lui trascorsi nella casa della Lârina. Tatiana è inorridita al pensiero che Onieghin possa rimanere ucciso e perduto per sempre per lei, mentre Olga, la Lârina e gli invitati biasimano i giovani che agiscono in maniera così impulsiva e cieca. Onieghin prova segretamente rimorso per le proprie azioni.

¹¹ Tuttavia accetta la sfida di Lenski per dargli una lezione e per aver interpretato male delle azioni innocenti.

Scena seconda

Un mulino ad acqua sulle rive di un ruscello in un bosco. È mattina presto, il sole si è appena levato

¹² Introduzione

¹³ Zaretsky, ufficiale e padrino di Lenski, cerca Onieghin, chiedendosi se si sia perso.

¹⁴ Oppresso dai presentimenti, Lenski sente che sarà ucciso nel duello. Ricorda i giorni della sua giovinezza e il suo amore per Olga.

¹⁵ Arriva Onieghin, accompagnato solo da un servitore come padrino.

¹⁶ Mentre i due padrini si accordano, Onieghin e Lenski fanno un ultimo, inutile tentativo di riconciliazione. Nel duello che segue, Lenski rimane ucciso.

Atto III

Scena prima

Diversi anni dopo. La casa del principe Gremin a San Pietroburgo

¹⁷ Gli ospiti danzano una polacca e poi si dividono in gruppi di conversazione.

¹⁸ Onieghin ha fatto ritorno a San Pietroburgo dopo diversi anni trascorsi a viaggiare senza meta, nel tentativo di sfuggire al suo passato. Ma non riesce ancora a dimenticare di aver ucciso l'unico amico di cui avesse stima; il suo fantasma lo ossessiona ancora costantemente. Gli altri ospiti accennano solo alla sua presenza cupa.

¹⁹ Si balla una scozzese.

²⁰ Entra il principe Gremin con sua moglie, che altri non è che Tatiana. Onieghin la riconosce, anche se con difficoltà, perché la donna è cambiata; non è più una fanciulla di provincia, ma una principessa dignitosa. Tatiana chiede chi sia lo sconosciuto che adesso sta parlando con suo marito e sentendo il nome Onieghin comincia a tremare internamente d'emozione.

²¹ L'anziano principe Gremin descrive a Onieghin il suo profondo amore per la sua giovane sposa, che ha trasformato la sua esistenza arida.

²² Il principe Gremin presenta Onieghin a Tatiana; la donna ammette di averlo conosciuto brevemente in passato.

²³ Quando Tatiana esce, Onieghin medita sui cambiamenti che sono sopravvenuti su di lei. Adesso rimpiange di averla respinta ed è pieno di nuovo ardore. Decide di dichiararle il proprio amore.

Scena seconda

Una stanza in casa del principe Gremin, la mattina dopo

²⁴ Introduzione

²⁵ Tatiana ha ricevuto una lettera da Onieghin in cui l'uomo le dichiara i propri sentimenti. Tra le lacrime, ricorda il suo amore di un tempo per lui. Arriva Onieghin, che implora la sua pietà.

²⁶ Asciugandosi le lacrime, Tatiana gli ricorda il loro primo incontro e la freddezza e la crudeltà con cui aveva reagito alle sue espressioni adolescenziali d'amore. Adesso si rende conto che lui aveva ragione; allora era troppo semplice e poco sofisticata. Forse il suo amore di oggi dipende dal fatto di averla ritrovata ricca e ben imparentata?

²⁷ Nonostante le proteste di Onieghin, rimane inflessibile.

²⁸ Per quanto sia tentata di cedere all'amore

che comincia a risvegliarsi nel suo cuore, deve rimanere fedele a suo marito.

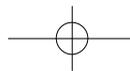
²⁹ Chiede a Onieghin di andarsene e corre via dalla stanza. Sopraffatto dalla disperazione, Onieghin medita sul suo triste destino.

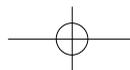
© Ewan West

Traduzione: Emanuela Guastella

Kiri Te Kanawa si è conquistata una fama leggendaria quasi da un giorno all'altro, dopo il suo sensazionale esordio nelle *Nazze di Figaro*, in cui interpretava il ruolo della Contessa, alla Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Da allora, ha rapidamente raggiunto un posto di prima linea nella lirica internazionale, diventando uno dei più famosi soprano del mondo. All'epoca del suo esordio operistico aveva già acquisito notevole esperienza nei concerti e nelle registrazioni e si trovava a proprio agio sia sotto le telecamere sia in teatro. Ha continuato a perfezionarsi nei recital e oggi è un'artista molto ricercata in molti contesti musicali diversi.

Kiri Te Kanawa è una figura nota nei principali teatri lirici del mondo: Covent Garden, Metropolitan Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, Opéra di Parigi, Sydney Opera House, Opera di Vienna, La Scala, San Francisco,





Monaco, Colonia e Verona. È un soprano lirico e tra le sue interpretazioni vanno ricordati tre importanti ruoli per il repertorio di Richard Strauss (Arabella, la Marschallin, e la Contessa in *Capriccio*), Fiordiligi, Donna Elvira, Pamina e la Contessa Almaviva per il repertorio mozartiano; Violetta, Amelia Boccanegra, Desdemona per il repertorio verdiano; Tosca, Mimi e Manon Lescaut per il repertorio pucciniano; Rosalinde di Johann Strauss, Tatiana di Čajkovskij, Micaela di Bizet e Marguerite di Gounod.

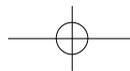
L'artista ha al proprio attivo tutta una serie di registrazioni di prestigio, tra cui una versione integrale di *Don Giovanni*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Così fan tutte*, *Die Zauberflöte* e *Tosca*, *La rondine* e *Manon Lescaut*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Arabella*, *Otello*, *La traviata*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Faust*, *Carmen*, *Capriccio* e *La bohème*, oltre ad antologie di arie tratte dal repertorio lirico francese, italiano e tedesco.

Nel 1982, Kiri Te Kanawa è stata nominata Dame, e nel 1995 ha ricevuto l'Order of New Zealand, una prestigiosa onorificenza della Regina.

Il grande baritono americano **Thomas Hampson**, è apprezzato per la sua versatilità e i notevoli risultati conseguiti nel repertorio

operistico e liederistico, oltre che nel campo della registrazione e della ricerca. La sua carriera internazionale l'ha portato a comparire nei teatri e nelle sale da concerto più prestigiose del mondo, facendo di lui uno dei solisti più rispettati, innovativi e ricercati. L'artista sottolinea il suo impegno per l'arte della lirica non solo attraverso l'insegnamento, ma anche attraverso la ricerca del repertorio e la creazione di progetti multimediali come *Voices from the Heart*, un documentario sulla musica di Stephen Foster per la Hessischer Rundfunk und Arte.

Thomas Hampson ha interpretato una notevole varietà di ruoli in un repertorio operistico che va da Rossini a Verdi e Puccini, e da Monteverdi a Britten e Henze. Tra le sue ultime interpretazioni più apprezzate vanno ricordati i ruoli di protagonista in *Guillaume Tell* (Vienna), *Eugenio Onieghin* (Vienna e Parigi), *Hamlet* di Ambroise Thomas (Montecarlo e San Francisco) e nella versione per baritono del *Werther* di Massenet raramente eseguita (New York); il baritono è stato père Germont ne *La traviata* (Zurigo); il marchese di Posa nella versione originale in francese del *Don Carlos* di Verdi (Parigi, Londra, Edimburgo); Wolfram nel *Tannhäuser* di Wagner (Zurigo), *Dr Faustus* di Busoni



(Salisburgo), e *King Roger* di Szymanowski (Birmingham). La stagione 2000/2001 comprende apparizioni in *Dr Faustus* (New York), *Hamlet* (Parigi), *Eugenio Onieghin*, *Guillaume Tell*, *Die lustige Witwe* e *Linda di Chamounix* (Vienna) oltre all'esordio nel ruolo di Oreste in *Iphigénie en Tauride* di Gluck a Salisburgo. Quasi tutte le registrazioni di Thomas Hampson sono state premiate (sei candidature a un *Grammy* e tre premi *Gramophone*).

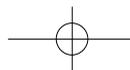
Il versatile tenore americano **Neil Rosenshein** è noto per le sue memorabili interpretazioni in teatro e per la sua arte musicale. Compare con altrettanto successo nei teatri lirici e nelle sale da concerto in un repertorio che va dal genere barocco a quello contemporaneo.

Durante la stagione 2000/2001, Neil Rosenshein sarà Erode in *Salome* con la Milwaukee Symphony, e Tikhon in *Katya Kabanova* con la Grand Opera di Houston. Ha esordito al Metropolitan con il ruolo di Alfredo ne *La traviata*, poi ha interpretato il ruolo di protagonista nel *Faust* di Gounod, il Principe in un nuovo allestimento di *Rusalka*, il protagonista di *Peter Grimes*, e i ruoli di Alfred e Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*. Specialista del repertorio francese, ha interpretato al

Metropolitan anche il ruolo di protagonista di *Werther* ed è comparso nelle vesti di Don José nella *Carmen* per la serie Met in the Parks. È stato ospite di tutti i principali teatri lirici degli Stati Uniti.

In Europa, Neil Rosenshein ha lavorato alla Royal Opera, Covent Garden (Lenski in *Eugenio Onieghin* e Steva in *Jenté*); all'Opéra di Parigi e all'Opera di Amburgo (Alfredo); all'Opera di Zurigo (Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*); all'Opéra de Lausanne (Cavaradossi e Werther); al Grand Théâtre de Genève (Tom Rakewell in *The Rake's Progress*); e all'Opera dei Paesi Bassi come protagonista di *Don Carlo* e *Der Zwerg* di Zemlinsky. Si è esibito inoltre a Essen, Bonn, Bruxelles, Lisbona, Lille, Nizza, Marsiglia, Toulouse, Lione, e con la New Israeli Opera. In Giappone ha interpretato il ruolo di Lenski con il Pacific Music Festival e la parte solistica per tenore della Nona sinfonia di Beethoven in un Concerto per la Pace che si è svolto a Hiroshima.

John Connell ha studiato presso il Royal Northern College of Music con Patrick McGuigan e presso il National Opera Studio. Ha esordito con la English National Opera nel ruolo di Ramphis in *Aida* e la stagione



successiva entrava a fare parte della compagnia come basso solista. Ha cantato regolarmente con la English National Opera come ospite, interpretando, tra l'altro, il ruolo del Commendatore (*Don Giovanni*), Colline (*La bohème*), il monaco (*Don Carlos*), la prima voce (*Doktor Faust* di Busoni), Ferrando (*Il trovatore*), Leporello (*Il convitato di pietra*), il vecchio detenuto (*Lady Macbeth di Mtsensk*), Basilio (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Dansker (*Billy Budd*), Banquo (*Macbeth*), Pogner (*I maestri cantori*) e Sarastro (*Il flauto magico*). Ha cantato inoltre per la Royal Opera e Opera North.

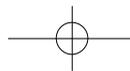
Le registrazioni comprendono *Peter Grimes* (per Chandos), *Billy Budd*, *Elijah*, *Stabat Mater* di Szymanowski e *Serenade to Music* di Vaughan Williams. Per la BBC ha effettuato una registrazione radiofonica di un'opera in studio, *The Burgers of Calais*. Tra i suoi altri impegni vanno ricordate le interpretazioni in concerto di *Die Walküre* in Spagna, il ruolo di Sarastro con la Welsh National Opera e il padre Guardiano (*La forza del destino*) con la English National Opera.

Nicolai Gedda è uno dei più grandi artisti del nostro tempo ed è apprezzato per la sua padronanza di un repertorio che abbraccia quasi tutti gli stili e le epoche nel campo

dell'opera, oratorio, operetta, lied o composizioni per orchestra.

Nato in Svezia da genitori russi e svedesi, ha esordito come professionista alla Royal Opera di Stoccolma nel 1952 in *Le Postillon de Longjumeau*. Nel 1953 esordiva alla Scala di Milano, nel 1954 all'Opéra di Parigi e nel 1957 con il Metropolitan (nel ruolo di protagonista del *Faust* di Gounod). Dal suo esordio con la Royal Opera nel 1965 (come duca di Mantova nel *Rigoletto* di Verdi) vi ha fatto ritorno per cantare Benvenuto Cellini, Alfredo, Gustavo III in *Un ballo in maschera*, Nemorino e Lenski. Ha creato ruoli di protagonista in *Vanessa* di Barber e *The Last Savage* di Menotti al Metropolitan.

I suoi trionfi operistici vanno dalle opere di Haydn e Mozart a Stravinskij, Orff, Barber e Menotti, mentre in recital viene considerato uno straordinario interprete di lieder. Nicolai Gedda ha lavorato con quasi tutti i più grandi direttori degli ultimi trentacinque anni, tra cui Beecham, Bernstein, Giulini, Klemperer e Solti. Inoltre è uno dei tenori con la discografia più ricca del mondo: ha al suo attivo 200 registrazioni, che comprendono versioni integrali delle opere *Guillaume Tell*, *La bohème*, *Faust*, *Werther*, *Manon*, *Così fan tutte* e *Benvenuto Cellini*.



Recentemente Nicolai Gedda è comparso in un concerto di arie tratte da opere e operette che ha riscosso grande successo presso la Royal Opera House e ha fatto ritorno qui per un nuovo allestimento del *Palestrina* di Pfitzner.

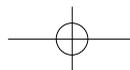
Patricia Bardon, di Dublino, si è messa in luce per la prima volta vincendo il primo concorso mondiale per voci di Cardiff; da allora è diventata un'importante interprete internazionale di opere e concerti.

I suoi ruoli operistici comprendono Arsace (*Semiramide*) alla Fenice di Venezia; il ruolo di protagonista nella *Cenerentola* al teatro La Monnaie di Bruxelles; il ruolo di protagonista di *Carmen* per l'Opera di Amburgo, la Welsh National Opera e Scottish Opera; Penelope (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) al Maggio Musicale Fiorentino e ad Atene con Trevor Pinnock; il ruolo di protagonista nell'*Orlando* di Handel a New York, Parigi, Lione, Strasburgo e Montpellier con William Christie e Les Arts Florissants; Smeton (*Anna Bolena*) a San Francisco; Amastris (*Serse*) con Ivor Bolton per l'Opera di Monaco, a Dresda e Montpellier; Juno (*Seneca*) a Innsbruck con René Jacobs; il ruolo di protagonista in *Tamerlano* al festival di Beaune; Helen (*King Priam*) per De Vlaamse Opera, Anversa, e la

terza damigella (*Die Zauberflöte*) a Verona; ruoli in *Guillaume Tell*, *Mosè in Egitto*, *Rigoletto*, *La fanciulla del West* e *Mefistofele* per la Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, e numerosi ruoli per Opera North, Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera, English National Opera e Glyndebourne. Futuri impegni prevedono apparizioni alla Lyric Opera di Chicago, il Maggio Musicale con Zubin Mehta, l'Opera di Monaco, la English National Opera e Amsterdam.

Patricia Bardon ha un repertorio concertistico vasto e completo, che l'ha vista comparire alla Scala, Madrid, Bruxelles, Berlino, ai festival di Edimburgo e Montreux, Cincinnati, Tokio. Le sue registrazioni comprendono *Orlando*, *Elijah*, Erda (*Das Rheingold* per Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation), Amastris (*Serse*) e *Rigoletto*.

Richard Van Allan è un baritono basso tra i più illustri della Gran Bretagna. È membro della English National Opera e compare in numerosi ruoli di protagonista; ha cantato inoltre al Covent Garden, Opera North, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Welsh National Opera e Scottish Opera. Dirige il National Opera Studio. I suoi impegni lirici all'estero lo hanno portato al Metropolitan di New York,



all'Opéra di Parigi, al Teatro Colón di Buenos Aires, a San Diego, Miami e Seattle. Ha interpretato, tra l'altro, il ruolo di protagonista nel *Don Quichotte* di Massenet (English National Opera e Victoria State Opera), Theseus (*The Fairy Queen*), Basilio, Old Man (*King Priam*) per la Flanders Opera e l'ENO e Don Jerome (*La Dueña* per Opera North).

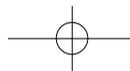
Le registrazioni di Richard Van Allan comprendono *Così fan tutte* di Mozart con Montserrat Caballé, Janet Baker e Ileana Cotrubas per la direzione di Sir Colin Davis, *Don Giovanni* con Bernard Haitink, il ruolo di Raleigh (*Gloriana* di Britten) con Sir Charles Mackerras, *Billy Budd*, e per Chandos *La Dueña* di Roberto Gerhard.

Linda Finnie è nata in Scozia e ha studiato presso la Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama e la Royal Academy of Music. È comparsa con tutte le principali compagnie operistiche britanniche, in particolare con la English National Opera nel ruolo di Brangäne (*Tristano e Isotta*), Eboli (*Don Carlos*), Amneris (*Aida*), Ortrud (*Lohengrin*) e Ulrica (*Un ballo in maschera*), e con la Royal Opera nel ruolo di Waltraute (*Götterdämmerung*). Al di fuori del Regno Unito è comparsa a Parigi, Ginevra, Francoforte, in Fiandra, a Lille, Nizza, Vienna,

Tokio, Singapore, in Australia, Nuova Zelanda e al festival di Bayreuth.

Le numerose registrazioni di Linda Finnie per Chandos includono opere di Bliss, Diepenbrock, Korngold e Respighi, oltre ai cicli di lieder di Mahler, *Elijah*, *Sea Pictures* di Elgar e *The Light of Life*, e *Ivan the Terrible* di Prokof'ev (vincitore del premio Deutsche Schallplatten).

Nata nella contea inglese di Lancashire, Elizabeth Bainbridge effettuò gli studi al conservatorio londinese Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Nel 1964 fece il suo debutto al Royal Opera Covent Garden con *Die Walküre* e l'anno successivo entrò a far parte della compagnia omonima. Ha sostenuto, tra l'altro, la parte di Quickly, Suzuki, Amneris, Emilia, Erda, Arvidson, Filipyevna, della Vecchia (ne *The Midsummer Marriage*), Nonna Buryja (in *Jenůfka*) e della Zietta (in *Peter Grimes*). La Bainbridge si è esibita con la Royal Opera al Teatro alla Scala nel 1976, nella Corea del sud et nel Giappone nel 1979, all'Olympic Arts Festival 1984 di Los Angeles e al Festival d'Atene 1985. Le sue registrazioni discografiche includono *Norma*, *Les Troyens*, *L'astuta piccola volpe*, *Dido and Aeneas* e *The Midsummer Marriage*.



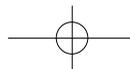
L'Orchestra della Welsh National Opera, fondata nel 1970, è considerata una delle migliori orchestre britanniche, molto apprezzata per il suo vasto repertorio operistico e anche per i concerti e le registrazioni.

Dal 1973 al 1986, sotto la guida del suo direttore musicale Richard Armstrong, l'orchestra ha sviluppato un vasto repertorio operistico. A questo periodo risale la prima collaborazione di Reginald Goodall con l'orchestra. Nel 1987 la carica di Direttore musicale passava a Sir Charles Mackerras e gli impegni di registrazione dell'orchestra cominciavano ad ampliarsi notevolmente. In precedenza erano state registrate diverse opere in versione integrale con Richard Bonyng e Joan Sutherland, Montserrat Caballé e Luciano Pavarotti alla testa di cast di prim'ordine. Con Mackerras l'orchestra ha registrato *Osud* di Janáček (CHAN 3019). Carlo Rizzi è Direttore musicale dal 1992. Nel 1995 l'Orchestra della Welsh National Opera si è aggiudicata il premio della Royal Philharmonic Society Music, nella categoria Large Ensemble.

Il **Coro della Welsh National Opera** è nato come gruppo professionale nel 1968. La sua

reputazione è cresciuta rapidamente e il suo lavoro operistico e concertistico ha riscosso grandi apprezzamenti non solo nel repertorio tradizionale, per esempio quello verdiano, ma anche nelle opere del ventesimo secolo, per esempio *A Midsummer Marriage* di Tippett e *Da una casa di morti* di Janáček. Il Coro ha registrato numerose opere, tra cui *Andrea Chénier* con Riccardo Chailly, *Tristan und Isolde* e *Parsifal* con Reginald Goodall, *I masnadieri*, *Norma*, *Hamlet*, *Ernani*, *Anna Bolena* e *Adriana Lecouvreur* con Richard Bonyng e *Tosca* con Georg Solti, *Righetto*, *Faust* e *Un ballo in maschera* con Carlo Rizzi, oltre a *The Mikado*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Yeomen of the Guard*, *Gloriana* di Britten e *Osud* di Janáček con Mackerras. Tra i brani concertistici, il coro ha registrato *Sea Drift* di Delius, *The Vigil of Venus* di George Lloyd e *Hiawatha* di Coleridge-Taylor.

Sir Charles Mackerras è nato nel 1925 negli Stati Uniti da genitori australiani ed ha studiato a Sydney e a Praga. In opera ha debuttato come direttore al Sadler's Wells Opera dove diresse la sensazionale prima esecuzione britannica della *Kát'a Kabanová* di Janáček, rappresentazione che inserì Janáček nel

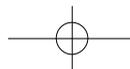


corrente repertorio britannico. È stato direttore stabile dell'opera di Amburgo dal 1966 al 1969 e direttore artistico del Sadler's Wells (poi English National Opera) dal 1970 al 1977 e della Welsh National Opera dal 1987 al 1991 per la quale diresse, fra l'altro, di nuovo Janáček con grande successo. L'allestimento e la registrazione di *Osud* vennero sponsorizzati dalla Peter Moores Foundation. Sir Charles Mackerras è direttore ad honoris della Scottish Chamber Orchestra, direttore emeritus della Welsh National Opera, direttore principali della San Francisco Opera e dalla stagione 1998/99 direttore artistico dell'Orchestra of St Luke's di New York. Da molti anni collabora con la Royal Opera, Covent Garden, e dirige regolarmente alla Metropolitan Opera di New York.

Sir Charles Mackerras ha intrapreso estese

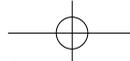
ricerche nella pratica esecutiva della musica del Settecento e Ottocento esercitando profonda influenza nell'interpretazione dei nostri giorni. La sua vasta discografia include un assai premiato ciclo di opere di Janáček con l'Orchestra Filarmonica di Vienna, *Gloriana* di Britten e *Rusalka* di Dvořák (che hanno vinto i premi *Gramophone*) e con la English National Opera il *Giulio Cesare* di Handel e *Maria Stuarda* di Donizetti (per la Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

Sir Charles Mackerras ha ricevuto l'onorificenza di Commendatore (CBE) nel 1974 e il titolo di Sir per la sua attività di musicista nel 1979. Gli è stata inoltre conferita la medaglia al merito della Repubblica Ceca, il premio Chopin ed è stato nominato "Companion of the Order of Australia".



Page from the manuscript score of *Eugene Onegin*



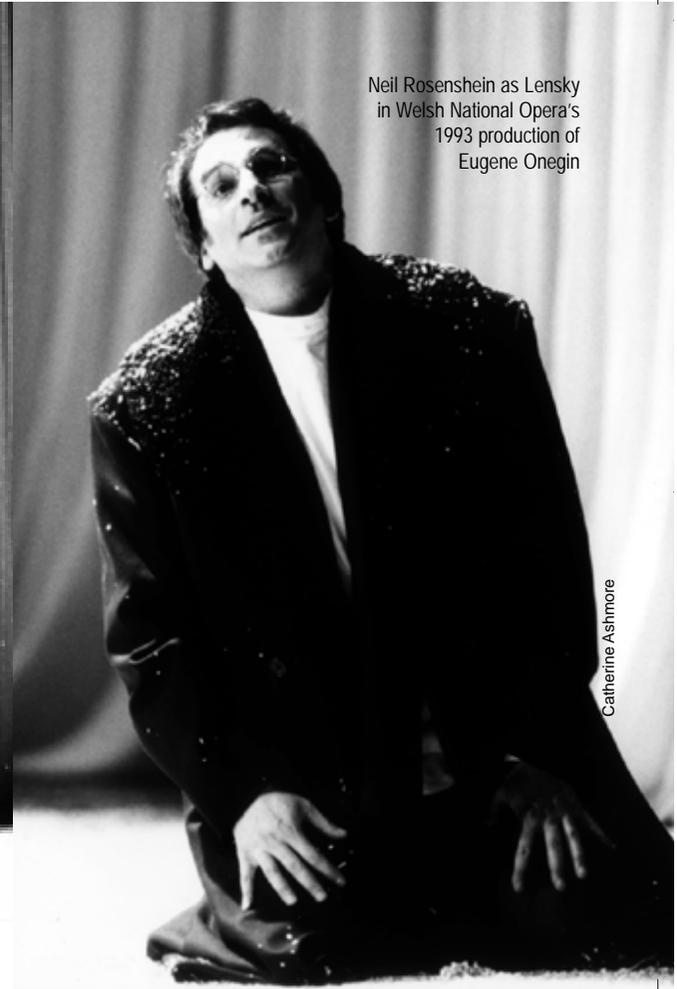


Neil Rosenshein as Lensky in
Welsh National Opera's 1993
production of Eugene Onegin

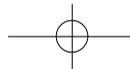


Catherine Ashmore

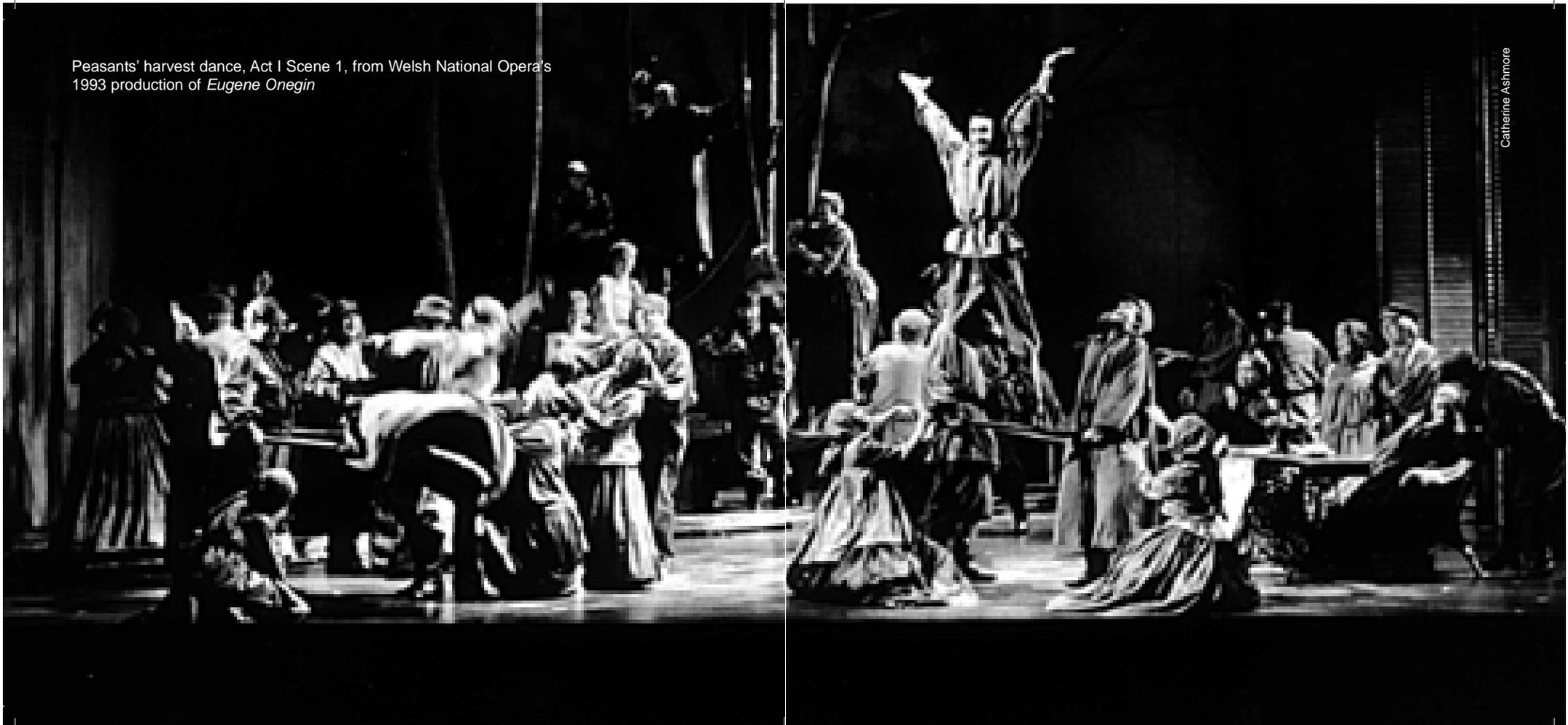
Neil Rosenshein as Lensky
in Welsh National Opera's
1993 production of
Eugene Onegin

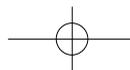


Catherine Ashmore



Peasants' harvest dance, Act I Scene 1, from Welsh National Opera's
1993 production of *Eugene Onegin*





COMPACT DISC ONE

Act I

1 Introduction

Scene 1

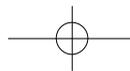
The garden of the Larin country estate. On the left, a house with a terrace; on the right, a shady tree with a flower bed nearby. In the background, a dilapidated wooden fence beyond which the village and church are visible through the thick foliage. It is early evening. Madame Larina sits under the tree making jam; Filippyevna is standing near her and helping. The doors leading from the house onto the terrace are open, and singing can be heard coming from within.

No. 1 Duet and Quartet

Tatyana and Olga

2 'Oh, did you hear the lovesick shepherd boy who sings of woe and sadness never-ending? The morning silence with him softly blending,
as he pours out his plaintive song of love.
Oh, did you hear the shepherd boy as he pours out his silent love?
Within the grove each day the shepherd sings his plaintive song of love.
Oh, did you hear at break of day the shepherd boy who sings of love?'

92



Madame Larina

I know that song and I remember how in those long-forgotten days when I was young, I also sang it.

Nurse

Ah, that was many years ago.

Tatyana and Olga

'And did you sigh to hear its melody, his song of love and sadness never-ending, and see his grief, all other grief transcending, as in distress he vowed that he would die?'
And did you sigh to hear him vow that he would die?

In his distress the shepherd boy looked down and vowed that he would die.

Madame Larina

How I adored those English novels!

Nurse

Yes, that was many years ago.

Madame Larina

Not that I read them for myself. No, it was just because my cousin – Princess Aline who lived in Moscow – would talk of Richardson all day.
Ah, Grandison! Ah, Richardson!

Nurse

Yes, I remember.
You'd only just become engaged!
But I knew it wasn't a love-match!

For you had set your heart on someone more romantically inclined, and dreamt you might elope together.

Madame Larina

Ah, so I had! Ah, so I had!
He took my heart away,
that dashing ensign in the Guards!

Nurse

All that seems many years ago.

Madame Larina

I was so elegant in those days...

Nurse

Yes, you looked lovely...

Madame Larina

...And wore each fashion *à la mode*

Nurse

...And wore each fashion of the day.

Madame Larina

But father chose a husband for me.

Nurse

Then you were married straight away; no wonder you were so unhappy.
But soon you said goodbye to Moscow; your noble master brought you here, and when your household duties started you grew contented.

Madame Larina

At first I woke each morning crying, and even longed to run away. But household duties soon began and gradually I grew contented.

Madame Larina and Nurse

God sends us habit from above in place of happiness and love. The proverb's true!

Madame Larina

And so romance, Princess Aline, and books of sentimental verse were all forgotten.

Nurse

And you soon preferred to dress in something simpler; instead of crinoline and wrap...

Madame Larina and Nurse

Ah! I/You wear a quilted gown and cap. God sends us habit from above in place of happiness and love. The proverb's true!

Madame Larina

And yet my husband loved me blindly and always treated me so kindly.

Nurse

And yet the master loved you blindly and always treated you so kindly.

93



Madame Larina and Nurse

Yes, God is good, he knows what's best,
and all who trust in him surely will find rest.

*(The singing of peasants is heard off-stage,
gradually coming nearer.)*

No. 2 Chorus and Dance of the Peasants

Leader

- 3 My legs ache and can no longer run,
now the day is done.

Peasants

My poor legs are aching and cannot run.

Leader

My hands both are sore from binding corn
since the break of morn.

Peasants

My sore hands are aching from binding corn.
My heart is grieving from bitter sorrow
and never-ending care;
my spirit is sore
for I'll see my love no more.

My legs ache, *etc*

*(The peasants enter, carrying before them a
decorated sheaf of corn.)*

Health and wealth to your ladyship,
years of plenty and fellowship!
Doubtless you know why we come to you
bearing a sheaf as we always do;
harvest is finished at last!

94

Madame Larina

Thank you, good people, I'm delighted.
You're welcome here.
Let's celebrate the harvest with a song!

Peasants

Why, that's a pleasure, ma'am.
Sing for her ladyship,
and take your places, dancers.
Come on now, are you ready?

*(During the song the girls dance with the sheaf and
Tatyana and Olga come out onto the balcony.)*

- 4 In a cottage by the water
lived a miller with his daughter.
Fa la la la, *etc*,

lived a miller with his daughter.

Came a farmer on the ferry,
rich and ruddy as a cherry.
Fa la la la, *etc*,

rich and ruddy as a cherry.

Saw the miller's pretty daughter,
started then and there to court her.
Fa la la la, *etc*,

started then and there to court her.

Thought he'd manage to persuade her
if he came to serenade her.

Fa la la la, *etc*,

if he came to serenade her.

'Won't you listen to my pleading?
I'm a gentleman of breeding.'

Fa la la la, *etc*,

'I'm a gentleman of breeding.'

'You have said the same to Sasha;
broke your promise to Parasha!'

Fa la la la, *etc*,

'broke your promise to Parasha!'

'Don't believe that harridan Parasha,
when I see her next I swear I'll thrash her!
Don't believe Parasha,
who's been gossiping with Masha;
if we meet again I'll thrash her!'

But the miller's pretty daughter
shouted back across the water,
Fa la la la, *etc*,

shouted back across the water.

'Though you've got your fascination,
I must keep my reputation,
so I'll be at your disposal
when you make me a proposal!'

Fa la la la! *etc*

No. 3 Scene and Aria

Tatyana (with book in hand)

- 5 Oh, how I love to hear the people singing,
for music makes me lose myself
in endless dreaming and yearning far away.

*(Olga and Tatyana come down from the balcony
and join their mother.)*

Olga

Ah, Tanya, Tanya, you dream the whole day long!
I'm not like you at all; when I hear songs
they always set me dancing.
(She dances.)

'In a cottage by the water
lived a miller with his daughter.'
*(Olga embraces her mother and then moves down-
stage to sing Madame Larina, the Nurse and
Tatyana gather round her.)*

- 6 I'm not the sort to sit in silence,
at night I never stay awake
and watch the moonlight at my window,
or sigh and sigh and sigh
as if my heart would break!

So why be sad? Behave as I do
and lead a life that's always gay;
for when you're cheerful and fond of laughter
the heart grows younger every day.
Never give way to sorrow or despair;
each morning calls anew to pleasure!
My love of life is past all measure,
that's why my heart is free from care!

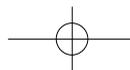
No. 4 Scene

Madame Larina

- 7 Come here, my darling Olga!
I love to see you happy and contented.
You'd really like to spend the whole day dancing,
I'm sure of it!
(Tatyana and the Nurse walk away from the others.)

95





Nurse

Tanyusha, what's the matter? Tell me, child;
perhaps you're feeling ill.

Tatyana

No, Nanny, please don't worry.

Madame Larina (*turning to the peasants*)

Good people, let me thank you for your
singing.
You must be thirsty now.
Filippyevna, arrange for wine before they leave.
My friends, God bless you!

Peasants

Goodbye, and thank you, ma'am!

*(The Nurse goes out with the peasants. Tatyana sits
down on the terrace steps and becomes engrossed in
her book.)*

Olga

Oh, mother, what's the matter with Tatyana?

Madame Larina

Dear, dear! Indeed, you look quite pale, my
darling.

Tatyana

But no more than usual.
You're far too anxious, mother!
Can't you see I'm busy reading my novel?

Madame Larina

Ah, clearly that's the reason!

Tatyana

It's such a moving tale of two young people;
they're both in love yet so unhappy,
and I'm sorry for them.
Oh, how they had to suffer!

Madame Larina

Tanya darling, when I was young I, too,
would get upset from reading these romances.
They're all made up, my child!
As time went by I came to realise that in life
there are no heroes or heroines.

Olga

You try to sound so worldly, but all the time
forget you're in your apron!
Think what a sight you'd look if Lensky came!
*(Olga laughs; Madame Larina hastily takes off her
apron.)*
Hush, there's a carriage coming!
Here he is!

Madame Larina

He's very early!

Tatyana (*looking down from the terrace*)

He's not alone.

Madame Larina

Who can it be?

(The Nurse enters in haste with a coachman.)

Nurse

Your ladyship, he says it's Mister Lensky;
Mister Onegin's with him.

Tatyana

Oh, in that case I must go!
*(She wants to run away; Madame Larina restrains
her.)*

Madame Larina

What nonsense, Tanya! They'll be offended.
Heavens above! My cap is on all askew!
*(The Nurse arranges Tatyana's dress and then goes
out, motioning to her not to be afraid.)*

Olga (*to Madame Larina*)

Why don't you ask them in?

Madame Larina (*to the coachman*)

Invite them to come in!

*(The coachman runs out. In great excitement they
all prepare to receive the guests. Enter Onegin and
Lensky. Lensky goes up to Madame Larina, kisses
her hand and bows to the girls courteously.)*

No. 5 Scene and Quartet

Lensky

⁸ *Mesdames*, I hope that you'll excuse me,
I've brought a visitor. This is Onegin,
my neighbour and my friend.

Onegin

I'm greatly honoured.

Madame Larina (*flustered*)

No really, sir, it's we who are honoured.
Be seated and meet my daughters.

Onegin

I find them charming, ma'am.

Madame Larina

Let's go inside to talk,
or, if you would prefer it,
we could remain here in the garden.
I beg you, don't stand on ceremony;
we are neighbours, so do exactly as you please.

Lensky (*to Onegin*)

I love it here! There's nowhere else that's quite
so peaceful
or secluded. It's just delightful!

Madame Larina

Stay here then!
But I must go indoors to see about the supper.
My girls will entertain you. *A bientôt!*

*(She goes out, motioning to Tatyana not to be shy.
Lensky and Onegin walk over to the right. Tatyana
and Olga stand on the opposite side.)*

Onegin (*to Lensky*)

⁹ Now tell me, which of them's Tatyana?
I'm really interested to know.

Lensky

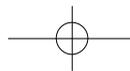
The older one who's looking sad,
with eyes cast downwards so demurely.

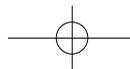
Onegin

I'm most surprised you've chosen Olga.

Lensky

And why?





Onegin

For I'd prefer the other
were I a poet just like you.
Your Olga's features have no life,
no special character or poetry.
I'll grant she has a pretty face,
but like the moon it lacks all grace;
yes, like the moon it's vacant and prosaic.

Lensky

Clearly there is a gulf between us;
for prose and verse
or fire and water
aren't more unlike than you and I!
Ah, yes! There is a gulf, *etc*
...Are not more different then you and I!

Tatyana (to herself)

Now, now at last my eyes are open,
my heart assures me it is he!
And now I know his precious image
will haunt me for the rest of life.
I'll dream each night of my beloved.
His coming has aroused within me
the magic feeling of desire,
and set my loving soul on fire.
His coming's filled we with desire,
and straightway set my soul on fire!

Olga (to herself)

I always knew that when Onegin came here
his elegance and easy social grace
would make a deep impression.
The gossips will begin to talk

and make their scandalous conclusions.
Slyly, they'll call him eligible
though also hint that he's depraved.
I knew that when Onegin came here
his charm would make a deep impression.
The village gossips now will start to whisper
and link Tatyana's name with his.
The people here will start to gossip and whisper,
linking Tanya's name with his.

*(Lensky goes up to Olga. Onegin looks nonchalantly
at Tatyana who stands with downcast eyes. He then
goes up to her and engages her in conversation.)*

No. 6 Scene and Arioso

Lensky (ardently, to Olga)

¹⁰ How perfect, how wonderful,
to be once more together!

Olga

I thought we met here only yesterday.

Lensky

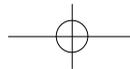
I know, but that is ages.
One whole day of separation –
it seemed endless!

Olga

Endless! You make it sound so terrible!
Don't exaggerate!

Lensky

The word was strong, Olga,
even as my love for you!



*(Lensky and Olga walk away. Onegin and Tatyana
come forward. He talks to her with cool
politeness.)*

Onegin

But tell me, though,
do you not find it rather boring
living so cut off?
It's very quaint but somewhat rustic;
there's nothing here to offer you
distraction or give amusement.

Tatyana

Well, I'm fond of reading.

Onegin

Really! It's true that books can give us pleasure;
I enjoy them also,
but even reading surely has its limits!

Tatyana

I daydream as I wander through the garden.

Onegin

What is it that you dream about?

Tatyana

My greatest joy is meditation,
and has been since I was a child.

Onegin

I see that you're incurably romantic;
I, too, once used to be the same.

*(Onegin and Tatyana move away to the opposite
side of the garden while Lensky and Olga return.)*

Lensky (to Olga with passionate ardour)

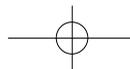
¹¹ How I love you, I adore you, Olga,
with the hopeless longing of a poet's fervour,
as only he is doomed to love!
My heart is ruled by one emotion,
one constant yearning for devotion,
for you're my goddess and my muse.
While still a boy my heart was captured:
your voice would haunt me night and day.
I watched your innocence, enraptured,
and heard you laughing at your play.
We lived not caring for the morrow,
sharing each childish joy and sorrow.
Ah!
How I worship you, how I worship you,
with the hopeless love known only to a poet!
You are all my inspiration,
you alone are all my gladness,
all my happiness and sadness!
How I love you, I adore you,
and there's no power on earth,
no time or distance that could keep us both
apart,
or ever cool the ardour
of my pure desire,
for love has warmed it with eternal fire!

Olga

Our days of childhood were serene
amid this quiet rural scene.

Lensky

For I worship you!



Olga

Our parents watched us as we grew
and knew that I would marry you.

Lensky

Yes, I worship you and only you!

(Madame Larina and the Nurse come out onto the terrace. It grows darker; by the end of the scene it is night.)

No. 7 Closing Scene

Madame Larina

¹² Ah, here you are! But what's become of Tanya?

Nurse

I saw her with your guest down by the lakeside.
I'll go at once and call her.

Madame Larina

Yes, and say to her
she should be in by now. Our guests are hungry,
and soon it will be supper-time.

(to Lensky)

So meanwhile, let's go indoors.

Lensky

We'll follow you, ma'am.

(The Nurse goes out. Onegin and Tatyana enter. The Nurse re-enters behind them, trying to overhear their conversation. Onegin walks calmly across the stage and by the end of his speech has reached the terrace. Tatyana still shows signs of embarrassment.)

Onegin (to Tatyana)

My uncle wrote that he was ailing
and so I called on him down here.
Thank God, he died a few weeks later
and earned my gratitude, I fear,
for he had left me quite a fortune!
But, Lord above, I found it tedious
to sit beside him night and day,
just waiting till he passed away!

(They go into the house)

Nurse

My poor Tanyusha! She looks so timid,
her eyes cast meekly down, and never speaking.
How pale she's looking and how shy!
Can that young gentleman have caught my
darling's fancy?

(She goes off pensively, shaking her head.)

Scene 2

Tatyana's room, very simply furnished with old-fashioned white wooden chairs covered with chintz, and window curtains of the same material. A bed, over which is a bookshelf. A chest of drawers, covered with a cloth, and on it a mirror on a stand. Vases of flowers. At the window, a table with writing materials. As the curtain rises, Tatyana, wearing a white nightdress, is sitting before her mirror very much lost in thought. The Nurse is standing near her.

No. 8 Introduction and Scene

¹³ **Introduction**

Nurse

¹⁴ There! No more talk tonight.

It's bedtime, Tanya.

You must be up in time for church tomorrow.

Now sleep, my child.

(Tatyana rises listlessly and sits on the bed.

The Nurse caresses her.)

Tatyana

¹⁵ I can't sleep, Nanny. It's so sultry.

Open the window and sit by me.

(The Nurse opens the window and sits on a chair beside Tatyana.)

Nurse

Tanya, what's wrong with you?

Tatyana

I'm restless,
so tell me more about the past.

Nurse

¹⁶ Well, let me think now. In the old days

my head was full of any number

of fairy stories and children's tales,

of ancient legends and romance.

Today, though, my poor memory's failing;

those tales are quite forgotten.

Ah! My mind grows weaker every day.

Yes, truly!

Tatyana

Tell me something else, then.
When you were just a girl like me,
did you not fall in love at all?

Nurse

Now really, Tanya! What a question!
No one in those days spoke of love,
and if I'd used that word my husband's mother
would have sent me packing!

Tatyana

Then why did you get married, Nanny?

Nurse

God willed it so, and so it happened,
when I was only just thirteen.

Vanya was even younger still.

The match was settled by our parents,
my dowry fixed, and then one day
my father blessed me with a kiss.

I cried, and no one could console me.

Weeping, my friends unbound my braids
and led me solemnly to church.

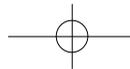
And so I went to live with strangers...

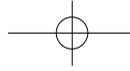
But you're not listening to me, child!

(Tatyana embraces the Nurse with passionate emotion.)

Tatyana

Oh, Nanny, Nanny, I'm so wretched, so unhappy,
I feel like bursting into tears and sobbing,
for my heart is breaking.





Nurse

There, there, my child, you must be ill.
But God will cure you, you shall see.
Come, let me sprinkle holy water on you.
You're all on fire.

Tatyana (*hesitantly*)

I am not ill;
I'll tell you, Nanny, I'm... I'm in love!
So leave me now, please leave me now,
for I'm in love!

Nurse

But Tanya...

Tatyana

I beg you, leave me here alone.
First bring my table with some paper,
my pen as well. I'll go to bed then.
Good night!

Nurse (*doing what she is told*)

Good night; sleep soundly, Tanya!

(*She goes out.*)

No. 9 Letter Scene

(*Tatyana remains for a long time lost in thought.
Then she rises, very agitated and with an expression
of resolute determination.*)

Tatyana

¹⁷ To write is foolishness, I know it,
but as I love him, I must show it.
And though I languish evermore,

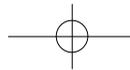
I'll learn what rapture lies in store!
Desire has poisoned me with longing;
all day I only think of him.
For though I hide in my despair,
my fatal tempter finds me there;
my tempter haunts my footsteps everywhere!
(*She goes to the writing table, sits down and writes,
then pauses.*)

No, that won't do! I'll start another.
(*She tears up the letter.*)

What's wrong with me? I'm all on fire.
I can't think how to start.

(*She writes again, then pauses and reads over what
she has written.*)

¹⁸ I had to write, my heart compelled me;
what is there more that I need say?
Henceforth I know that you'll disdain me
for acting rashly in this way.
But if you'd only show compassion
and think how wretched I must be,
you'll surely not abandon me!
At first I meant to hide my secret;
believe me, I had hoped that you would never
know it;
never know, never know!
(*She lays the letter aside.*)
Oh, yes, I'd sworn that I would hide my love,
and not betray this madness that consumes me.
But now I can't subdue my passion any more;
fate will decide whatever lies in store.
I shall declare myself and trust in my confession!
(*She writes again.*)



'Whatever brought you to this lonely place?
For since I live here in seclusion
I never would have seen your face,
or would have known such bitter torment.
My heart would soon have grown contented
and then as time went by, who knows,
I might have chanced to find another,
agreed to honour and respect him,
and made a faithful, loving wife...'
(*She becomes lost in thought, then rises suddenly.*)
But no!

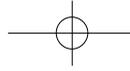
¹⁹ No, there could never be another
to whom I'd give my love!
My life is bound to yours for ever;
this is decreed by heaven above.
Now my existence has a meaning,
that noble soul for which I sigh.
I know that God above has sent you
to guard and to love me till I die!
Often I'd seen you in my dreaming;
your face and form had long been dear.
Nightly you whispered in my ear;
your words disturbed me with their meaning.
And then... that dream of mine came true.
For when we met, I straightway knew you,
and in that instant, beating wildly,
my heart cried out to me: 'Love him, love him!'

²⁰ For you were always there beside me
when, sick at heart, I knelt in prayer.
Your noble presence seemed to guide me
when I would help the poor and
needy in charity.

Yes, it is your beloved vision
that comes in this moment of decision
to stand beside me as I write,
and fill my heart with new emotion,
with whispered promise of devotion,
that brings me comfort and delight.
(*She goes to the table and sits down again to write.*)

²¹ 'Are you an angel sent to guard me,
or will you tempt and then discard me?
Resolve these doubts I can't dispel.
Could all my dreams be self-delusion?
Am I too innocent to tell?
Has Fate prepared its own conclusion?'
(*She again rises and walks about pensively.*)
²² 'No, come what may, I'm now resolved
to lay my worthless life before you.
Pity my burning tears and grant me
your protection, I implore you,
I implore you!
Imagine, I am all alone;
there's no one here who understands me.
(*She comes down-stage.*)

I fear my reason will desert me;
to find release I'd gladly die.
I long for you,
I long for you to be my saviour;
one word can set my heart on fire
or simply stifle my desire,
to leave me desolate and wretched!
(*She goes quickly to the table and hurriedly finishes
the letter. Then she stands up and seals it.*)
It's finished! Dare I read it through?



For shame and terror now assail me.
But since his honour is my pledge
I boldly trust he will not fail me!

No. 10 Scene and Duet

(Tatyana goes to the window and draws the curtains. Daylight quickly fills the room)

²³ Ah, night is over!

The rising sun
awakes another day.
(She sits by the window)
There goes the shepherd;
the world's at peace.
But I'm not, I'm not!

(She becomes lost in thought. The door opens quietly and the Nurse enters. At first she does not notice Tatyana.)

Nurse

It's time to dress, my dear. Wake up!
(She sees Tatyana.)
Why, what is this? You're up already!
You must have risen with the lark.
Last night I feared that you were ill,
but, thank the Lord, that's over now and done
with.
You're quite your cheerful self again.
Your cheeks have got their colour back.

(Tatyana comes from the window and picks up the letter.)

Tatyana

²⁴ Oh, Nanny, may I ask a favour?

Nurse

Of course, my darling, tell me what.

Tatyana

Don't think that... really... or suspect that...
Just promise, promise that you'll do it!

Nurse

There, there, I'll give my word of honour.

Tatyana

²⁵ Then make your grandson go in secret
to take this note to him – you know –
that gentleman who lives nearby,
and make him promise that he'll never reveal
who wrote it or from whom it came.

Nurse

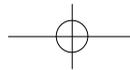
To whom? I didn't catch the name.
I'm growing slow of understanding.
We've got so many neighbours here,
I cannot know them all, I fear.
Speak up, now, and tell me as plainly as you can.

Tatyana *(impatiently)*

Nanny, how can you be so stupid!

Nurse

My dear, I must be getting old,
my wits have started to forsake me.
But once they were as bright as gold
and that's why the master put you into my
keeping.



Tatyana

Oh, Nanny, what does all that matter?
I tell you that my letter is for
the neighbour who was here the other day.

Nurse

I understand now.

Tatyana

It must be taken to Onegin's house.

Nurse

Please don't be angry that my mind's astray,
I'm growing older every day.

Tatyana

Onegin's house!

Nurse

I understand now.

Tatyana

Onegin's house!

Nurse

I understand!

Tatyana

So send your grandson with my letter to
Onegin.

Nurse

Please don't be angry that my mind's astray.
I'm growing older every day.
But Tanya, why have you turned paler?

Tatyana

Truly, there's no cause for dismay;
just send your grandson on his way!

(The Nurse takes the letter, but stands as if still in doubt. Tatyana motions to her to go. The Nurse goes to the door, stands there a moment considering, then comes back again. Finally she signifies that she understands and leaves the room. Tatyana sits down at the table and, resting her elbows on it, again becomes lost in thought.)

Scene 3

Another part of the Larin estate. Thick lilac and acacia bushes, untidy flower beds and an old bench. In the background, peasant girls are gathering berries among the bushes, and singing

No. 11 Chorus of Girls

Girls

²⁶ Dear companions, come this way,
join us in the games we play.
Choose a happy melody
suited to our revelry.
Sing our favourite roundelay/carol
for the harvest holiday.
If a handsome lad comes near,
let us try to lure him here.
When he's seen us from afar
he'll discover where we are.
If he follows in pursuit,



pelt him gaily with your fruit:
all the berries you can find,
summer fruit of every kind.
As the lad is chased away
see that he is teased, and say,
'Never come again to spy
on the girlish games we play!'

No. 12 Scene and Aria

(Tatyana enters, running quickly, and throws herself, exhausted, on the bench)

Tatyana

- ²⁷ Onegin! Here! To see me!
Oh, heavens, what must he think of me?
What will his answer be?
Why did I write and yield to love so easily?
What foolishness took hold of me
and made me send him such a letter?
It's certain now! My heart foretells me;
the fatal tempter I adore
will now despise me evermore!
O God above, I'm so unhappy,
I'm so forlorn!
He's here, I know it!
Yes, it is he! It is he!

(Onegin enters. Tatyana jumps to her feet and Onegin approaches her. She lowers her head. He speaks with dignity, calmly and somewhat coldly.)

Onegin

- ²⁸ You wrote a letter –

do not deny it!
What I read displayed your innocence and feeling,
the wealth of love your heart's concealing,
and I was touched by what you said.
It stirred within me once again
an old and sensitive emotion.
Yet I must ask you to reflect;
surely it can't be thought correct
to write so frankly to a stranger.
So hear what I now have to say,
then you can judge me as you may.

Tatyana

Oh, heavens! How distressing and how painful!

(She sinks down on the bench)

Onegin

- ²⁹ Were I the sort who had intended
to lead a calm domestic life;
if lasting happiness depended
on seeking out a perfect wife,
then doubtless I'd agree
that only you could share my life with me.
But I'm not made for warm affection,
and as for wedlock, even less;
and though I value your perfection
I fear I'd cause you much distress.
In fact, and this I've now decided,
to marry you would be misguided.
At first my love would be untold,
but time would make it soon grow cold.
Imagine, then, the thorny roses



Hymen might scatter in our way,
who knows, perhaps for many a day!
My soul was destined to discover
it sought no other;
that Fate decrees for good or ill.
I'll always love you as a brother,
yes, as a brother,
or yet, who knows, more dearly still.
I promise you, maybe more dearly still.
I beg you not to feel rejected;
your confidence will be respected.
Believe me, all I say is true.
³⁰ But try to practise self-control;
for some men, unlike me,
abuse such youthful innocence as yours.

Girls *(in the distance)*

Dear companions, come this way,
join us in the games we play.
Choose a happy melody
suited to our revelry.
If a handsome lad comes near,
let us try to lure him here.
If he follows in pursuit,
pelt him gaily with your fruit.
See that he is teased, and say,
'Never come again to spy
on the girlish games we play!'

(As the song gradually becomes more distant, Onegin offers his arm to Tatyana; she gives him a long imploring look, then rises mechanically and goes out meekly, leaning on his arm)

COMPACT DISC TWO

Act II

Scene 1

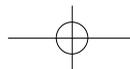
A brightly illuminated ballroom in Madame Larina's house. In the centre a chandelier; on the walls, sconces with lighted tallow candles. Guests, in very old-fashioned evening dress, and among them officers, dressed in the military uniform of the 1820s, are dancing a waltz. The older men sit in groups and watch the dancing admiringly. The older women, who are carrying reticules, occupy chairs placed along the walls. Onegin is dancing with Tatyana and Lensky with Olga. Madame Larina moves about continually with the air of a solicitous hostess.

No. 13 Entr'acte, Waltz and Chorus

¹ Entr'acte and Waltz

Guests

- ² This is superb!
We never had expected
such splendid company
and dancing to a band!
We seldom see parties
such as this one.
What glorious food! What glorious wine!
So tasteful, so well planned.



Not for years have we seen such a party.
Everyone should enjoy it while they can.
Yes, it's splendid! Simply delightful!
What a party, what a party!
We have never been more surprised!

Elderly Gentlemen

Here in the country we live in seclusion;
festive occasions and dancing are rare.
Hunting is usually our only diversion;
makes a nice change from the hounds and the
hare!

Elderly Ladies

That's all our men-folk consider amusing,
just shooting and fishing and up with the sun;
and then in the evening they're always exhausted,
yet we who've been working could do with some
fun!

(A group of young girls surrounds the Captain.)

Young Girls

Oh, Captain Petrovich,
we beg you to tell us
the name of your regiment!

Captain

³ Certainly! But why aren't you dancing?

Young Girls

Well, no one has asked us to.

Captain

In that case, dear ladies, the pleasure is mine!

(Onegin is dancing with Tatyana. The others stop dancing and everyone watches them.)

Elderly Ladies

Look at them! Now what could be plainer?
She must find a husband. That's him, for sure!
How sad for Tatyana, for once they are married,
she'll find he's a tyrant. He gambles, what's more!
(Onegin quietly passes by them, trying to overhear their conversation.)

He's most discourteous and conceited;
the things he says can't be repeated!
He's a freemason, so they say,
and ends up drunk on wine each day.

Onegin

⁴ So that's their verdict! No more of this!
I'm tired of hearing their dreary gossip.
Serves me right, though, for coming.
Whatever brought me here to this confounded
ball?
Yes, what! I can't forgive Vladimir for persuading me
to come, so I'll dance again with Olga,
for that will make him jealous.
(At this moment, Olga passes by, followed by Lensky.)
Here she is.
(to Olga)
Allow me!

Lensky (to Olga)

But you had promised me this dance!

Onegin (to Lensky)

You're mistaken there, my friend!

(He dances with Olga.)

Lensky

She's smiling at him!
I must be dreaming! Olga!
What's come over you?

Guests

Such a party!
Such a surprise!
What delightful dancing!
How delightful!
The party's at its height.
This is superb!
We never had expected
such splendid company
and dancing to a band!

Not for years have we seen such a party;
this is truly perfection! Beyond all expectation!
Hail to music, hail to song!
We'll dance and feast the whole night long!
Hail to pleasure, to feasting, and dancing!
We'll dance and we'll feast the whole night long!

No. 14 Scene and Triquet's Couplets

(Lensky goes up to Olga, who has just finished dancing with Onegin.)

Lensky

⁵ How can I have deserved to be so taunted by you?
Ah, Olga, must you torture me like this?
What have I done?

Olga

I can't imagine what you're referring to!

Lensky

Throughout the evening your waltzes,
yes, all of them, were with Onegin!
And yet when I asked, you just ignored me.

Olga

Vladimir, this is foolish;
don't let a dance upset you so.

Lensky

What! Don't you think I care?
Am I supposed to watch quite indifferently
while you make eyes at him and flirt like some
coquette!
He held you far too closely
and pressed your hand in his.
I saw it all!

Olga

Oh, this is stupid jealousy and pure imagination!
I only talked to him,
he has such charm.

Lensky

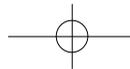
So, it's charm!
Ah, Olga, you no longer love me.

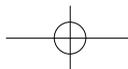
Olga

Don't be so silly!

Lensky

No, you do not love me.





(Onegin approaches them)

Will you dance the *cotillon* with me?

Onegin

No, with me!

For I shall hold you to your promise.

Olga

And I mean to keep it.

(to Lensky)

Let this be your lesson for being so jealous!

Lensky

Olga!

Olga

That's enough!

(Monsieur Triquet is seen in the background, surrounded by a group of girls)

Just look how all the girls are gathering round Monsieur Triquet.

Onegin

Who's he?

Olga

A Frenchman who lives here in the village.

Girls

Monsieur Triquet! Monsieur Triquet!
Chantez de grâce un couplet!

Triquet

- ⁶ By chance I 'ave with me a song
But first, where is the Mademoiselle?
Without she 'ere I cannot start,
car le couplet est fait pour elle!

Girls

Here she is! Here she is!

Triquet

Aha, *voilà* ze lovely birthday queen!

Mesdames, I'm ready to *commence*,
remarquez bien ma French nuance!

(All the guests form a circle and Tatyana is placed in the middle. Triquet addresses the following couplets to her; she is embarrassed and wants to escape but is prevented from doing so. He sings with great expression.)

- ⁷ *'A cette fête conviée,
de celle dont le jour est fêté,
contemplons le charme et la beauté
Son aspect doux et enchanteur
répand sur nous tous sa lueur;
de la voir quel plaisir, quel bonheur!
Brillez, brillez toujours, belle Tatiana!*

Guests

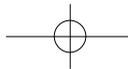
Bravo, bravo, bravo, Monsieur Triquet!

Your singing is delightful;

a fitting tribute for the day!

Triquet

*'Que le sort comble ses désirs,
que la joie, les jeux, les plaisirs
fixent sur ses lèvres le sourire!
Que sur le ciel de ce pays
étoile qui toujours brille et luit,
elle édaire nos jours et nos nuits!
Brillez, brillez toujours, belle Tatiana!*



Guests

Bravo, bravo, bravo, Monsieur Triquet!

Your singing is delightful;
a fitting tribute for the day!

(Monsieur Triquet bows his acknowledgments and then, on his knees, offers the song to the embarrassed Tatyana.)

No. 15 Mazurka and Scene

Captain

- ⁸ *Messieurs! Mesdames!*

I beg you, take your partners,
for now we have the *cotillon*.

(to Tatyana)

Allow me, pray!

Mazurka

(They lead off the dance. The guests pair off and dance. Onegin and Olga sit down towards the front of the stage. Lensky stands, lost in thought behind them. After dancing a turn with Olga, Onegin conducts her to her seat and then turns to Lensky as if he had only just noticed him)

Onegin

- ⁹ Why aren't you dancing, Lensky?
Even Hamlet was not as gloomy!
What's wrong with you?

Lensky

What's wrong! Can't you see?

I'm trying to admire

the way you show your friendship!

Onegin

Is that so?

I had expected quite a different answer.

Why are you sulking then?

(Lensky at first answers quietly, but gradually his tone becomes more and more embittered and angry.)

Lensky

What nonsense! I'm not sulking.

I've watched with fascination how you lure these unsuspecting girls with flattering

compliments

and, trifling with their feelings, humiliate them.

(The guests gradually stop dancing as they become aware of the conversation between Onegin and Lensky.)

First you break the heart of poor Tatyana;

then you pick on Olga

and amuse yourself by compromising her.

You'll quickly turn her head

and make your conquest, then laugh at her.

What a man of honour!

Onegin *(with a sneer, but calmly)*

Come, you've lost your senses, Lensky!

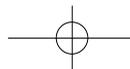
Lensky

Oh, thank you! I'm first of all insulted
and then openly declared a lunatic!

(Everybody stops dancing)

Guests

What's he saying? What's the matter?



(The guests leave their places and surround the quarrelling men)

Lensky

Onegin, you are no more my friend!
I hereby sever all ties of friendship with you,
for you are beneath contempt!

Guests

How did this quarrel come about,
what's more, at such a splendid party?
Let us hope it won't turn into something
serious!

Onegin *(drawing Lensky slightly to one side)*

Now, Lensky, listen; you're distraught!
Don't let us cause all this fuss and quarrel over
nothing.
I never wanted to embarrass you
and must protest, had no such base intention.
You *are* my friend.

Lensky *(with increasing passion)*

If that is so, why did you press her hand,
and whisper something?
She blushed as she answered you.
What was it you suggested?

Onegin

Enough, now! Don't be foolish;
the guests are listening.

Lensky *(beside himself)*

What is that to me? You publicly insult me,
so I insist on satisfaction!

Guests

What is it? What's the matter?
Who can tell us what has happened?

Lensky

I can!
So hear me now.
I simply asked Onegin
what was the reason for his conduct,
and he refused to answer me.
I therefore say to him, accept my challenge!

(Madame Larina pushes her way through the crowd and addresses Lensky.)

Madame Larina

A challenge! Oh, have pity!
Do not quarrel here in my house!

No. 16 Finale

Lensky

¹⁰ Here in your house! Here in your house!
(with great feeling)

It was here in these peaceful surroundings
that my leisure was spent as a child;
it was here that I first learnt the meaning
of a love that was tender and mild.
But this evening I've lost my illusions
and discovered that life's not a dream,
and that honour is just a delusion.
Even friendship that seemed so fraternal
can be shattered to ruins and grossly betrayed!

Onegin

Deep in my heart I must concede
that I have acted foolishly.
What made me do so?
Sadly now I can realise that for Lensky
love is something poetic,
and that passions, when they're sincere,
must not be trifled with.
By taunting him in front of Olga
I've earned the hatred of my friend.

Tatyana

What I have seen has made me wretched,
and I'm oppressed with jealous anguish;
for such behaviour I cannot understand.
Jealous anguish gives way to despair,
yes, my anguish gives way to despair,
as if an icy hand had gripped my heart in
torment!

Olga and Madame Larina

The evening may well end in horror
if they should really fight a duel!

Guests

Poor young Lensky! What a tragedy!

Onegin

I'm punished for my thoughtless conduct!

Lensky

Once I loved what I thought was perfection,
like an angel, as fair as the day.
Now I know it was purely deception,
for by nature she's a devil who'll cheat and betray!

Tatyana

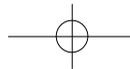
All is over now, no further hope is left!
Yet death because of him is welcome,
and sweeter than living without him!
Yes, death is now certain, my heart has foretold it.
I shall die, and yet I don't complain.
Hereafter no foolish illusions remain.
I realise that nothing can bring us together,
and death is now certain to part us for ever!

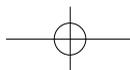
Olga

Why must all men behave the same
and think of duels as a game?
They're far too quick to pick a quarrel.
Why do Onegin and Lensky act like fools
and think that honour's made of rules?
Vladimir's jealousy will choke him,
yet I've done nothing to provoke him, not I.
How like a man to fly into a passion.
They're foolish, impulsive, they argue and quarrel,
but never a moment consider what fighting may
lead to.

Madame Larina

Why must all men behave the same
and think of duels as a game?
They're far too quick to pick a quarrel.
Why do Onegin and Lensky act like fools
and think that honour's made of rules?
The evening may well end in horror,
if they should really fight a duel.
Oh, the shame of it is cruel!
Why are the young always the same?





So foolish, impulsive, they argue and quarrel,
but never a moment consider what fighting may
lead to.

Guests

Oh, what a shame! It's really cruel
to spoil our party with their duel!
Young men today are all the same;
they've only got themselves to blame!
Yes, only got themselves to blame.
Why are the young always the same?
So foolish, impulsive; they argue and quarrel,
but never a moment consider what fighting may
lead to.

Onegin

Deep in my heart I must concede
that I have acted foolishly.
What made me do so? Now I realise
that Lensky's love was too poetic;
that passions, when they are sincere,
are never to be trifled with.
But taunting him in front of Olga
I've merely succeeded in rousing
the anger and hatred of one I loved.
Now it's too late to make amends;
I'm honour bound to answer for my action.

Lensky

Ah, Olga, you never were to blame,
so forgive me, my angel, my darling!
The fault was Onegin's for acting so basely,
and he shall be punished!

Onegin (to Lensky)

□ Your challenge I accept. So be it.
Everything you've said is ludicrous, yes, ludicrous,
and you deserve a lesson for such folly!

Lensky

We'll see tomorrow exactly
who deserved the lesson!
Perhaps I am a fool, but you...
you... lack honour, you seducer!

Onegin

Hold your tongue, sir, or I shall kill you!

*(Madame Larina, Olga and some guests hold
Lensky back. Tatyana is in tears. Onegin throws
himself at Lensky; they are separated. Onegin goes
to one side and turns his back on Lensky.)*

Guests

What a disgrace! Fighting a duel!
It must be prevented; we shall not allow it!
Until they are calmer we'll stop them from
leaving!
Otherwise there'll surely be a scandal!

Olga

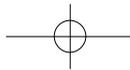
Vladimir, stop your quarrel, I implore you!

Lensky

Ah, Olga, Olga, farewell for ever!

Guests

Now for bloodshed!
(Lensky rushes out. Onegin also leaves quickly. Olga



*runs after Lensky but falls fainting. Everyone rushes
to help her.)*

Scene 2

*A rustic watermill on the banks of a wooded stream.
Early morning the sun has barely risen. It is winter.
When the curtain rises Lensky and Zaretsky are already
on stage. Lensky sits under a tree, lost in thought.
Zaretsky walks up and down impatiently.*

No. 17 Introduction, Scene and Aria

□ **Introduction**

Zaretsky

□ What's happened? Where can your opponent be?
Is he coming?

Lensky

Yes, I'm sure he'll come.

Zaretsky

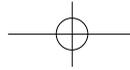
Well, nonetheless, I find it most discourteous!
He should be here, it's after six.
I wonder if he's lost his way?

*(Zaretsky walks over to the mill and enters into
conversation with the miller, who has just appeared
in the background. The miller shows him the
wheel, millstones, etc. Lensky continues to sit and
meditate.)*

Lensky

□ How far, how far away you seem now,

oh happy days when I was young!
(He rises and comes forward)
Shall I survive the day that's dawning?
I vainly try to read its warning.
It shrouds itself in mystery!
No matter, this is Fate's decree.
My rival's shot may well dispatch me
or miss its mark and pass me by.
So be it; death will come to claim me
at the moment of her choosing.
Welcome the day when sorrow calls;
welcome the night when silence falls.
Tomorrow's sky will stretch unclouded;
mankind will start another day.
But I, by that time, may be shrouded
and lie interred within my grave.
As Lethe slowly bears me downward
my name will cease to be remembered,
and fade from memory... save yours, Olga!
(with great feeling)
Will you then come, my angel, my beloved,
to shed a tear where I am lying
and say there: 'Once we were in love,
but now he watches from above
as I lament his early dying?'
Ah, Olga, once we were in love!
To you alone I have devoted
a poet's feeling and emotion.
Ah, Olga, once we were in love!
Beloved friend, my promised bride,
I wait for you! Your bridegroom waits
to greet his chosen bride. Oh, come!



Oh, come to me, my chosen bride!
Oh, come, oh, come, be at my side!
How far, how far away you seem now,
oh happy days when I was young!

No. 18 Duel Scene

(Zaretsky comes forward and speaks to Lensky.)

Zaretsky

¹⁵ Ah, here they are!
But who's your friend brought with him?
I can't make out.

(Onegin enters with his servant Guillot, who carries the pistols. Onegin bows to the other two.)

Onegin

I trust you'll both excuse me;
clearly I've kept you waiting.

Zaretsky

No matter! Where, sir, is your second?
In my view duels are an art
and must, as such, be fought correctly.
Therefore I see to it that no one meets his end
just anyhow, but by the code, and circumspectly.
Established custom is the best.

Onegin

Sir, I am suitably impressed.
Where is my second?
Here he is – Monsieur Guillot.
As you may see, he's just my servant;
but you've no reason to object:

he doesn't know the *code duella*
but he's a worthy, honest fellow.
(Guillot bows deeply; Zaretsky returns his bow coldly.)
Well, shall we start?

Lensky

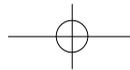
Why, yes, I'm ready.

(Zaretsky and Guillot step aside to discuss the conditions of the duel. Lensky and Onegin stand waiting, not looking at each other.)

Lensky and Onegin

¹⁶ We fight to satisfy our honour
and thirst to shed each other's blood.
Yet formerly we shared as brother
with brother in everything we could,
for such is friendship. Now, in anger,
like deadly rivals bent on vengeance,
each of us silently prepares
to kill his adversary if need be.
Ah!
Why can't we stop our anger's flood
before our hands are stained with blood,
and leave together reunited!
No! No! No! No!

(Zaretsky and Guillot have loaded the pistols and measured the distance. Zaretsky separates the adversaries and hands them the pistols. Everything is done in silence. Guillot, in embarrassment, hides behind a tree.)



Zaretsky

And now, draw closer!

(He claps his hands three times. The adversaries, who have not yet taken aim, take four steps forward. Onegin, as he advances, raises his pistol. As he does so, Lensky begins to take aim. Onegin fires; Lensky staggers, falls and drops his pistol. Zaretsky runs to him and examines him intently. Onegin also rushes towards his dying adversary.)

Onegin (in a stifled voice)

He's dead?

Zaretsky

He's dead.

(Aghast, Onegin clasps his head in his hands.)

Act III

Scene 1

One of the side-rooms in the house of a rich nobleman in St Petersburg

No. 19 Polonaise

¹⁷ **Polonaise**

(Guests dance; at the end they sit down. Others form groups and converse.)

No. 20 Scene and Aria

Onegin

¹⁸ Here, too, I'm bored!
Bored by all this worldly ostentation.

Nothing can extinguish the anguish of my soul!

I've killed the only friend I valued
and, though I've property and wealth,
I'm growing weary with myself.
I'm tired of indolence and leisure;
I've drifted without aim in life
and have no family or wife.
Boredom began to make me restless;
each day brought discontent and spleen,
until the languor of my spirits
impelled me to a change of scene.
I left behind, in disillusion,
the countryside, with its seclusion,
where I now saw at every bend
the spectre of my murdered friend!
And so I set out on my travels
and started wandering without aim.
But soon I realised, in despair,
that travel, too, was just as boring!
So I returned here, paid a call,
and joined them at this tedious ball!

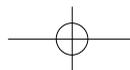
¹⁹ **Eccossaise**

(The guests dance an Eccossaise. As they finish, Prince Gremin enters with Tatyana on his arm.)

Guests

²⁰ The Princess Gremina! Make way there.

(Guests of both sexes come up to Tatyana and greet her with deference.)



Some Men

Which is she, though?
Why, there she is!

Women

The one who's standing by the Prince.

Men

What simple elegance she has!

Onegin (*looking intently at Tatyana*)

Is that Tatyana? Surely... no!
What, from that dull provincial village?
It cannot be! And how composed,
how unaffected, and how noble!
Her dignity would grace a queen!

(Tatyana turns to those near her, indicating with a look that she is referring to Onegin, whom Prince Gremin has just approached)

Tatyana

Who is that person there, the tall one
beside the Prince?

Men

Oh, he's an odd one,
a misanthrope and somewhat mad.
He's been abroad, we hear,
but now he's back again; his name's Onegin.

Tatyana

Onegin?

Men

Do you know him, then?

Tatyana

We met each other long ago.

(aside)

Oh, heaven! Let me not betray
that I am trembling with emotion!

Onegin (*to Gremin*)

I seem to know that lady there,
the one who's in the crimson turban;
the Spanish envoy's at her side.

Gremin

Aha! It seems that you're a stranger!
You must be introduced to her.

Onegin

Who is she, though?

Gremin

My wife, of course!

Onegin

I never knew that you were married.
Since when, though?

Gremin

Just about two years.

Onegin

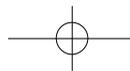
To whom?

Gremin

The Larin girl.

Onegin

Tatyana!



Gremin

You must have met.

Onegin

Yes, we were neighbours.

No. 20a Aria

Gremin (*dignified and calm, but with warmth*)

²¹ The gift of love is rightly treasured;
its countless blessings can't be measured.
It brings its warming potency
to callow youths when hearts are free;
or to the warrior, old and grey,
whom Fate has tempered in the fray.
Thus I, a simple man of action,
now love Tatyana to distraction.
A wasted, melancholy life
is what I led until my wife
like sun at last on darkest ocean
awoke my heart to new emotion.
Amid this turmoil and dissension,
this world of ignorance and hate,
where hypocrites can win attention
and cowards patronise and prate;
among coquettes who swear devotion
and fawning fops who court promotion,
amid morality's decay
and friends who'd cheat you and betray;
in all our hollow show of fashion,
this endless, futile, social round
where scarce an honest man is found
who'll keep his word or show compassion,

Tatyana's virtue seemed to shine
with pure devotion, long denied me,
as if some power that was divine
had sent an angel down to guide me.
The gift of love, *etc*

No. 21 Scene and Arioso

²² And now, you must be introduced to her.
(Prince Gremin leads Onegin over to Tatyana.)
My dear, allow me to present you
to my good friend and relative,
Onegin.

(Onegin bows deeply. Tatyana returns his greeting with utter simplicity, as if in no way embarrassed.)

Tatyana

I'm pleased to meet you;
indeed I think we've met before.

Onegin

In the country... yes... we met.

Tatyana

Do tell me,
have you been living there since then?

Onegin

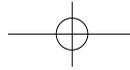
Oh, no! I've just got back here
from foreign travels.

Tatyana

When was that?

Onegin

This morning.



Tatyana (to Grenin)
Dearest, I'm tired now.

(Tatyana leaves on Grenin's arm, returning the greetings of the guests. Onegin follows her with his eyes.)

Onegin

²³ Is this the very same Tatyana,
the selfsame timid country girl
whose touching innocence and love
I once so heartlessly rejected
with such a moralising lecture?
Yes, she it was, whose youthful passion
I dismissed with such presumption.
How is it she can now appear
so condescending and austere?
What's wrong with me? I'm in a trance.
What is this feeling that has stirred
my frigid heart to new emotion?
Resentment? Jealousy? Regret?
Or can it be that I'm in love?
Yes, there's no doubt at all, I love her,
and all my life will never love another!
It seems I once again recapture
the former joy of youthful rapture.
Desire has poisoned me with longing;
henceforth I'll only think of her.
She shall be mine for evermore;
this I shall beg her and implore.
I swear I'll die to win her love once more!

(He rushes out. The Ecossaise begins again.)

Scene 2

A reception room in Prince Grenin's house

No. 22 Final Scene

²⁴ **Introduction**

(Tatyana enters in an elegant morning dress and with a letter in her hand.)

Tatyana

²⁵ Why, why did he return and write this letter?
He comes again like some relentless ghost to
haunt me!
Ah, how that look of his disturbed my peaceful
mind,
stirring the memories of passions left behind!
As long ago now, young and tender-hearted,
he set my loving soul on fire, until we parted.
(She weeps. Onegin appears at the door. He stands for a moment looking passionately at the weeping Tatyana. Then he hurries to her and falls kneeling at her feet. She looks at him without surprise or anger and then motions to him to rise.)
I beg you, rise, and attend,
for I must speak to you quite plainly.
Onegin, how can you forget that long ago
our paths were crossed by destiny,
and with what meekness
I heard the lesson that you taught.

Onegin

Have pity! Show me some compassion.
I was mistaken, and now I'm punished.

(Tatyana wipes away her tears and motions to Onegin not to interrupt.)

Tatyana

²⁶ Onegin, I was then far younger
and better looking, it may be.
I fell in love with you, but tell me,
what was your answer to my plea?
You scorned my love with formal coldness
and made me suffer for my boldness.
You said I should be more controlled.
And, heavens, how my blood runs cold
when I recall your lack of feeling
and how you lectured me!
Yet you were not to blame.
Now I can realise that you acted quite
correctly;
all that you said to me was true.
For *then* you found me far too simple;
cut off from all this social world
you had no use for me. So tell me,
what makes you tolerate me now?
Perhaps I know why you pursue me
and wrote that fervent letter to me.
I think the reason must be this:
you flatter me because I'm rich
and wife of one who, for his valour,
lives in the favour of the court.
For what a conquest it would seem
if I should yield to your persuasion!
The world would echo with your fame,
adding new lustre to your name!

Onegin

²⁷ Ah, Tatyana! Oh, how
can you believe in such deception
or think I'd ever stoop so low?
It's clear that you have no conception
of what I'm willing to forego.
If you but realised how intensely
I feel the agony of love;
how every moment I must stifle
the burning ardour of my heart
which sets me longing to embrace you
with all the fervour I possess,
to worship you and beg forgiveness
for ever causing you distress!

Tatyana

I'm weeping!

Onegin

Weep, then! Tears from *your* eyes
are precious jewels that I treasure!

Tatyana and Onegin

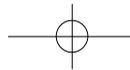
Ah, happiness was once so near us,
so near us, so near us!

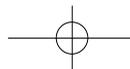
Tatyana

Destiny has willed that we should part;
there's no returning.
For I am married, so I beg,
yes, I beseech you now to leave me.

Onegin

To leave you? To leave you? Am I to leave you?
No! No, I have only one desire





and must remain with you for ever.
 Those eyes of yours, that lovely smile,
 these are the visions none can sever.
 To live without you and yet know
 how near you are would be to perish.
 I'd gladly suffer torment for your sake
 or even die, yes, die, Tatyana, die!
 For you are all to me, yes, all I cherish!

(With growing passion, Onegin again falls on his knees before her and seizes her hand. Somewhat frightened, she withdraws it.)

Tatyana

²⁸ Onegin, as a man of honour,
 you will surely grant my wish!

Onegin

No, no, I cannot leave you now!

Tatyana

Yevgeny, I not only ask
 but beg of you to leave me!

Onegin

Have pity!

Tatyana

Then learn the truth, I can't conceal it –
 ah, I love you still!

(Tatyana, overwhelmed by her confession, sinks on Onegin's breast. He takes her in his arms but she, recovering her senses quickly, frees herself from his embrace)

Onegin

You love me still!
 What is this magic you have spoken?
 What heaven, ecstasy!
 For *this* is how I knew Tatyana!

Tatyana

No, no! Former days cannot return.
 The die is cast; I have a husband
 and mean to keep the vow I swore.
 I shall be his for evermore.

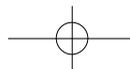
(She tries to leave but sits down, overcome. Onegin kneels down before her; wildly impassioned.)

Onegin

You have confessed that you still love me
 so I'm resolved in my design.
 Why waste your days in loveless duty?
 Fate has decreed that you are mine.
 We were intended for each other;
 our lives were guided from on high,
 for now I know that God has sent me
 to guard and love you till I die.
 Then let the world henceforth discover
 that we belong to one another.
 Forget your home and come away;
 with love this is the only way!

Tatyana (standing up)

²⁹ Onegin! Leave me, I entreat you;
 my husband must not find you here.
 I honour and shall never fail him.
 I mean to keep the vow I gave.



(aside)

Although I'm trembling with elation,
 I must not yield to this temptation.
 My heart is his, and his alone.
 But duty and honour command me.
 I'll be true for evermore.

Onegin

No,
 for I have sworn I'll not renounce you.
 In the cause of love all duty must surrender.
 Forsake your home and come away,
 for now there is no other way!
 Oh, leave your home and come with me.
 You love me, I know it,
 and destiny has shown that you belong
 to me for evermore!

(Onegin tries to draw Tatyana to him; highly overwrought, she struggles to free herself from his embrace, but her strength fails her.)

Tatyana

Now I must leave you.

Onegin

No, you must stay!

Tatyana

Onegin!

Onegin

Stay, I beg you, do not go!

Tatyana

I'm deaf to all persuasion.

Onegin

I love you, I love you!

Tatyana

Don't torture me!

Onegin

I worship you!

Tatyana

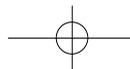
Farewell for ever!

(Tatyana leaves the room. Onegin stands for a moment, overcome with doubt and despair.)

Onegin

Disgraced and shamed;
 now only death remains!

(He rushes out.)



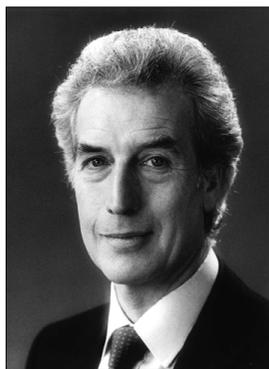
Kiri Te Kanawa

Neil Rosenshein



Catherine Ashmore

Zoë Dominic



Richard Van Allan

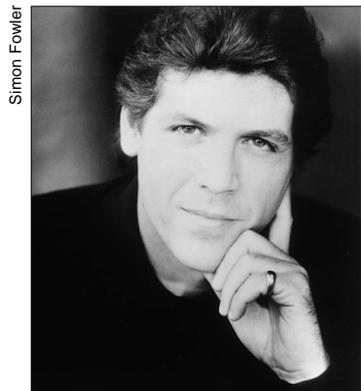


Linda Finnie



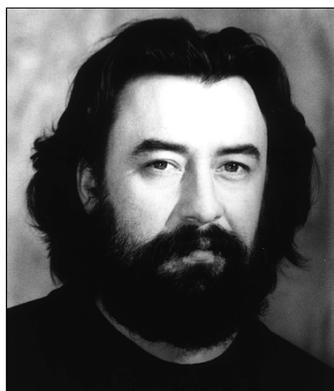
Elizabeth Bainbridge

Donald Southern



Thomas Hampson

John Connell



Simon Fowler

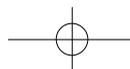


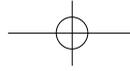
Nicolai Gedda

Patricia Bardon



Edmund Ross

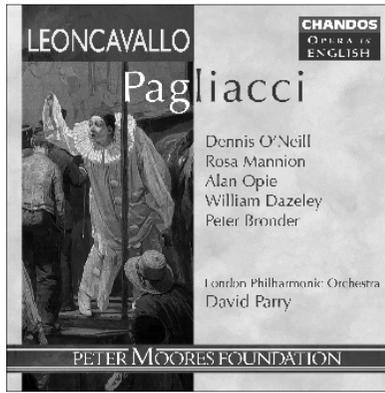




Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3004



CHAN 3003

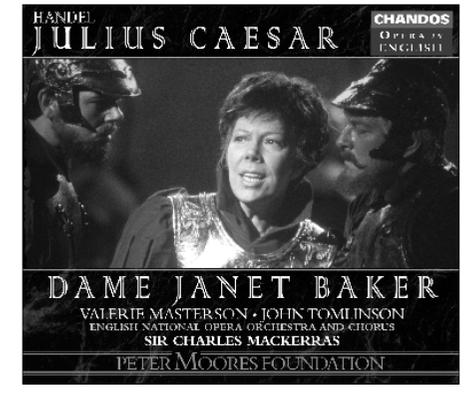


CHAN 3029

Opera in English on Chandos



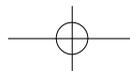
CHAN 3017(2)



CHAN 3019(3)



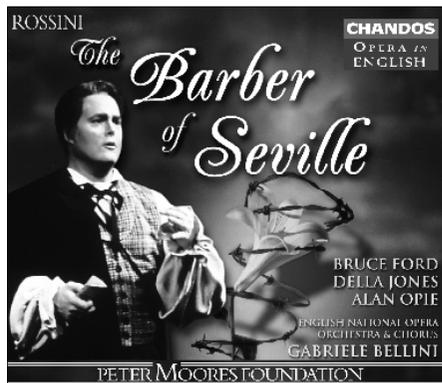
CHAN 3023(2)





Opera in English on Chandos

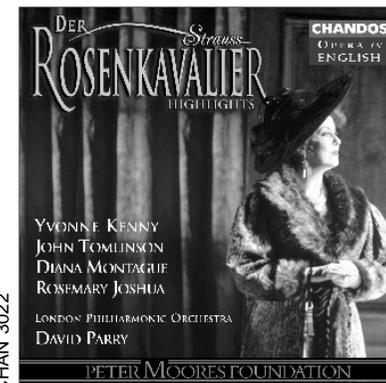
Opera in English on Chandos



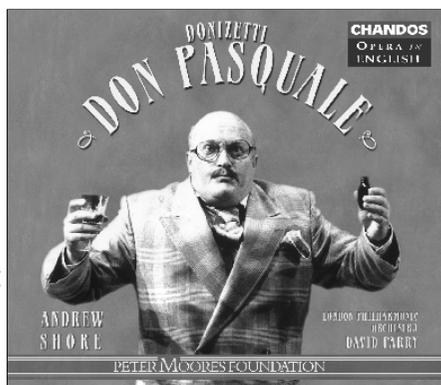
CHAN 3025(2)



CHAN 3007



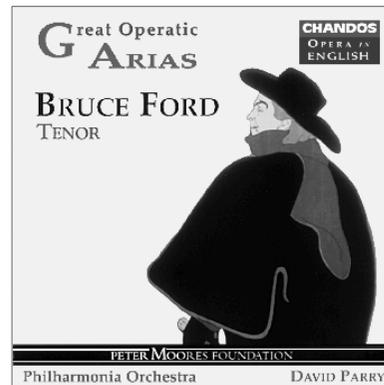
CHAN 3022



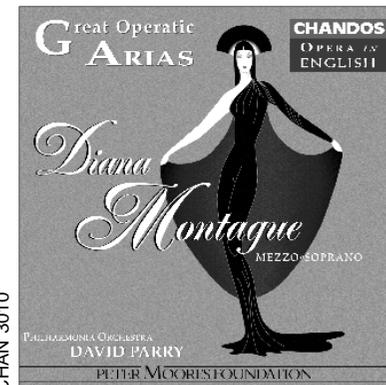
CHAN 3011(2)



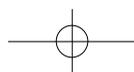
CHAN 3027(2)

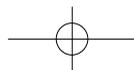


CHAN 3006

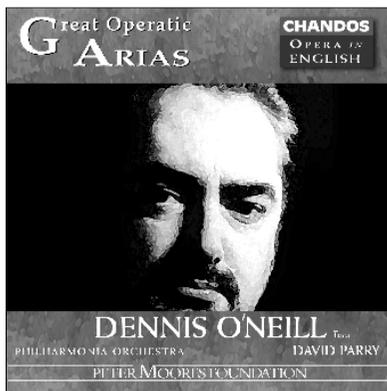


CHAN 3010

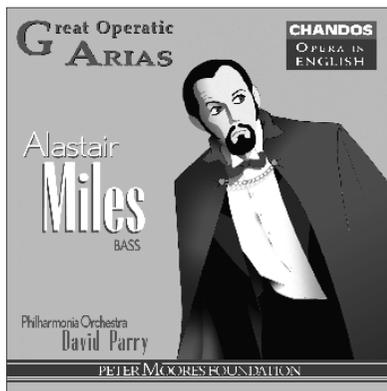




Opera in English on Chandos



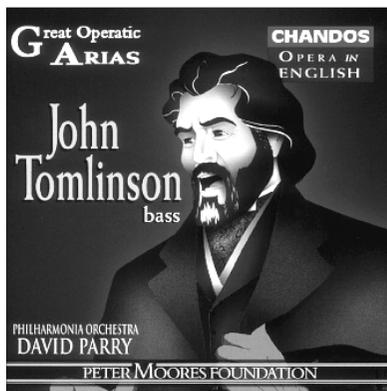
CHAN 3013



CHAN 3032



CHAN 3035



CHAN 3044

Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3049



CHAN 3005(2)



CHAN 3030(2)





Opera in English on Chandos

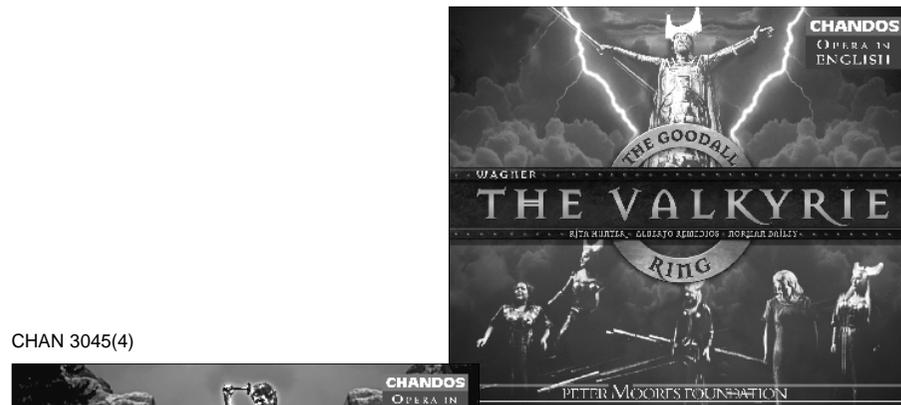


CHAN 3033(2)

CHAN 3036(2)



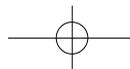
Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3045(4)

CHAN 3038(4)





Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3008(2)

CHAN 3000(2)

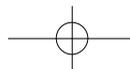


You can now purchase Chandos CDs directly from us. For further details please telephone +44 (0) 1206 225225 for Chandos Direct. Fax: +44 (0) 1206 225201. Chandos Records Ltd, Chandos House, Commerce Way, Colchester, Essex CO2 8HQ, UK
E-mail: chandosdirect@chandos.net Website: www.chandos.net

Any requests to license tracks from this or any other Chandos disc should be made directly to the Copyright Administrator, Chandos Records Ltd, at the above address.

Assistant to Sir Charles Mackerras: Julian Smith
Rehearsal pianist: Michael Pollock
Production assistant: Clare Powell

Recording producer John Fraser
Sound engineer Mark Vigers
Assistant engineer Mark Rogers
Editors Matthew Cocker & Bob Whitney
Recording venue Brangwyn Hall, Swansea; 29 June–6 July 1992
Front cover Photo of Kiri Te Kanawa and Thomas Hampson by Sheila Rock
Back cover Photo of Sir Charles Mackerras by Zoë Dominic
Design Cass Cassidy
Booklet typeset by Dave Partridge
Booklet editor Kara Reed
p 2001 Chandos Records Ltd from a p 1994 recording
c 2001 Chandos Records Ltd
Chandos Records Ltd, Colchester, Essex CO2 8HQ, England
Printed in the EU



TCHAIKOVSKY: EUGENE ONEGIN

CHANDOS DIGITAL 2-disc set CHAN 3042(2)



Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Eugene Oegin

Opera in three acts

Text by the composer and Konstantin Shilovsky after Alexander Pushkin's verse novel *Eugene Oegin*

English translation by David Lloyd-Jones

Eugene OeginThomas Hampson *baritone*
 TatyanaKiri Te Kanawa *soprano*
 LenskyNeil Rosenshein *tenor*
 Prince GreminJohn Connell *bass*
 A Captain/ZaretskyRichard Van Allan *bass*
 Monsieur TriquetNicolai Gedda *tenor*
 Madame LarinaLinda Finnie *mezzo-soprano*
 FilippyevnaElizabeth Bainbridge *mezzo-soprano*
 OlgaPatricia Bardon *mezzo-soprano*

COMPACT DISC
ONE
TT 70:30

COMPACT DISC
TWO
TT 71:50



Orchestra and Chorus of Welsh National Opera

Gareth Jones chorus master

Sir Charles Mackerras

CHANDOS

SOLOISTS / ORCHESTRA & CHORUS OF WELSH NATIONAL OPERA / MACKERRAS

CHAN 3042(2)

CHANDOS RECORDS LTD
Colchester . Essex . England



© 2001 Chandos Records Ltd from a © 1994 recording
© 2001 Chandos Records Ltd Printed in the EU