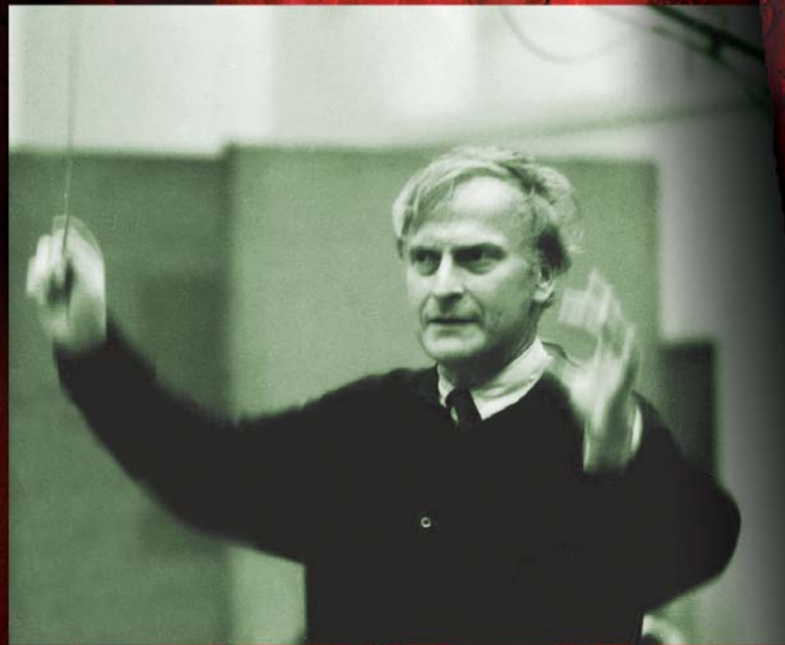


CHAN 3081(2)



CHANDOS
OPERA IN
ENGLISH

MOZART
The
ABDUCTION
from the **SERAGLIO**

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION



AKG

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

The Phoenix Opera production of

The Abduction from the Seraglio

Comic opera in three acts

Libretto by G. Stephanie from a play by C.F. Bretzner

Texts of musical numbers translated by Joan Cross and Anne Wood

English dialogue translated and adapted by Hugh Mills

Pasha SelimDavid Kelsey *speaking part*
Constanza, a Spanish lady, betrothed to BelmonteMattiwilda Dobbs *soprano*
Blonda, her English maidJenifer Eddy *soprano*
Belmonte, a Spanish nobleman.....Nicolai Gedda *tenor*
Pedrillo, former servant to Belmonte, now gardener to the PashaJohn Fryatt *tenor*
Osmin, Pasha Selim's stewardNoel Mangin *bass*

Ambrosian Singers

John McCarthy chorus master

The Bath Festival Orchestra

Robert Masters leader

Yehudi Menuhin

COMPACT DISC ONE

Act I

Scene 1

[1] Overture 4:11 [p. 68]

No. 1: Aria

[2] 'Here surely I must find her' 2:39 [p. 68]

[3] 'Constanza, my beloved' 0:13 [p. 68]
Belmonte

No. 2: Aria and Duet

[4] 'You may think you've found a maiden' 2:34 [p. 68]
Osmín, Belmonte

[5] 'The devil take you and your song, sir' 4:18 [p. 69]
Belmonte, Osmín

[6] 'There – I got rid of him' 0:31 [p. 70]
Osmín, Pedrillo

No. 3: Aria

[7] 'These young men who go a-spying' 5:06 [p. 70]
Osmín, Pedrillo

[8] 'Ouf! Thank God he's gone' 2:14 [p. 71]
Pedrillo, Belmonte

No. 4: Aria

[9] 'Constanza! Constanza!' 0:33 [p. 73]

[10] 'Oh what trembling, oh what passion' 4:26 [p. 73]
Belmonte

Time Page

[11] 'They're coming, sir, they're coming' 0:19 [p. 73]
Pedrillo

No. 5: Chorus

[12] 'Sing to the mighty Pasha Selim' 1:35 [p. 73]
Chorus

[13] 'Always so sad, my beloved' 0:50 [p. 73]
Pasha Selim, Constanza

No. 6: Aria

[14] 'How I loved him, I was happy' 5:43 [p. 74]
Constanza

[15] 'Pasha Selim, I'll be your slave' 2:44 [p. 74]
Constanza, Selim, Pedrillo, Belmonte

No. 7: Trio

[16] 'March, march, march, off you go' 2:18 [p. 76]
Osmín, Belmonte, Pedrillo

Act II

[17] 'Tra-la-le-ra. Tra-la-le-ra' 0:42 [p. 76]
Osmín, Blonda

No. 8: Aria

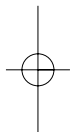
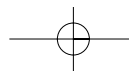
[18] 'With smiles and kind caresses' 3:51 [p. 77]
Blonda

[19] 'Gentleness! Kindness!' 1:09 [p. 77]
Osmín, Blonda

	Time	Page
No. 9: Duet		
[20] 'I'm going, but mark what I say'	1:08	[p. 78]
[21] 'O Englishmen you must be crazy' <i>Osmin, Blonda</i>	1:17	[p. 78]
[22] 'Be off now!' <i>Blonda, Osmin</i>	1:07	[p. 79]
[23] 'Ah, there's Constanza'	0:15	[p. 79]
No. 10: Recitative and Aria		
[24] 'Oh what sorrow overwhelms my spirit'	2:12	[p. 79]
[25] 'Endless grief tortures my spirit' <i>Constanza</i>	6:24	[p. 79]
TT 58:37		
COMPACT DISC TWO		
[1] 'Señorita, try – try – not to lose hope' <i>Blonda, Constanza, Pasha Selim</i>	0:58	[p. 80]
No. 11: Aria		
[2] 'Tortures unrelenting may for me be waiting' <i>Constanza</i>	8:56	[p. 80]
[3] 'She shows no signs of weakening' <i>Selim</i>	0:28	[p. 81]
[4] 'Blonda? Come here, quickly' <i>Pedrillo, Blonda</i>	0:48	[p. 81]

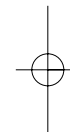
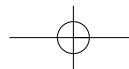
	Time	Page
No. 12: Aria		
[5] 'Oh, the happy, happy day' <i>Blonda</i>	2:50	[p. 82]
[6] 'Any sign of Osmin?' <i>Pedrillo, Blonda</i>	0:42	[p. 82]
No. 13: Aria		
[7] 'Now Pedrillo, now for battle!' <i>Pedrillo</i>	3:19	[p. 83]
[8] 'What do you want?' <i>Osmin, Pedrillo</i>	1:32	[p. 83]
No. 14: Duet		
[9] 'Here's to Bacchus, long live Bacchus' <i>Pedrillo, Osmin</i>	2:01	[p. 84]
[10] 'What do you say, brother Osmin?' <i>Pedrillo, Osmin, Belmonte</i>	1:16	[p. 84]
[11] 'Belmonte! Is it possible' <i>Constanza, Belmonte</i>	0:10	[p. 86]
No. 15: Aria		
[12] 'When our hearts are overflowing' <i>Belmonte</i>	4:53	[p. 86]
No. 16: Quartet		
[13] 'Ah, Belmonte, ah my dear one!' <i>Constanza, Belmonte, Pedrillo, Blonda</i>	2:54	[p. 86]

	Time	Page
[14] 'And yet within my heart' <i>Belmonte, Constanza, Pedrillo, Blonda</i>	2:00	[p. 87]
[15] 'I will. Ah, blame me not...' <i>Belmonte, Pedrillo, Constanza, Blonda</i>	1:35	[p. 88]
[16] 'If men mistrust our honour' <i>Constanza, Blonda, Belmonte, Pedrillo</i>	4:29	[p. 88]
Act III		
No. 17: Aria		
[17] 'Love, only love, can now direct me' <i>Belmonte</i>	6:36	[p. 90]
[18] 'Ah, Pedrillo! Is everything well?' <i>Belmonte, Pedrillo</i>	0:32	[p. 90]
No. 18: Romance		
[19] 'In Moorish lands a maiden fair' <i>Pedrillo, Belmonte</i>	3:01	[p. 90]
[20] 'Look, she's opening the window' <i>Pedrillo, Belmonte, Blonda, Osmin, Constanza</i>	1:33	[p. 91]



	Time	Page
No. 19: Aria		
[21] 'My triumphant hour's approaching' <i>Osmin</i>	3:25	[p. 93]
[22] 'What does all this mean?' <i>Pasha Selim, Osmin, Constanza, Belmonte</i>	3:27	[p. 93]
No. 20: Recitative and Duet		
[23] 'What dreadful fate conspires against us'	2:42	[p. 95]
[24] 'You must suffer for my rashness'	3:32	[p. 95]
[25] 'Then my life I gladly offer' <i>Belmonte, Constanza</i>	3:02	[p. 96]
[26] 'Guards! Bring in the two slaves!' <i>Osmin, Pedrillo, Belmonte, Blonda, Pasha Selim, Constanza</i>	2:36	[p. 96]
No. 21: Vaudeville and Chorus		
[27] 'Your noble mercy passes measure' <i>Belmonte, Constanza, Blonda, Pedrillo, Osmin</i>	2:47	[p. 97]
[28] 'The nobleman despises vengeance' <i>Constanza, Blonda, Belmonte, Pedrillo</i>	1:03	[p. 98]
[29] 'Pasha Selim, live for ever' <i>Chorus</i>	1:22	[p. 98]

TT 74:47



Mozart: The Abduction from the Seraglio

Mozart's opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio* – or to use its shorter English title, *The Seraglio* – had its origins in the desire of the Habsburg Emperor Joseph II to present his Viennese subjects with regular seasons of opera in their own language, German.

Joseph (1741–1790) was both highly musical and convinced of the value of the theatre as a means of shaping public opinion, so it was inevitable that he would seek to influence operatic life in the Imperial capital. Having assumed the title of Emperor on the death of his father, Francis I, in 1765, he reigned jointly with his mother until her death in 1780. Some years prior to this, however, Maria Theresa had devolved to him the running of the two Viennese court theatres, which he proceeded to reform, declaring the Burgtheater the German National Theatre while making the Kärntnertheater available to non-subsidised companies. His chief concern was with the former, where two troupes – one of actors and one of singers – would perform in the language of the audience.

The acting company proved relatively easy to set up, but it took longer to form an operatic

troupe of German-speaking singers worthy of an audience that was accustomed to the best. A second problem was repertoire. Though there were limited local traditions of opera in the vernacular in other German-speaking centres, there was practically none in Vienna itself, where Italian- or French-language companies had hitherto held sway. The answer was threefold. Firstly German works produced elsewhere could be adapted to suit local taste; secondly popular pieces by Gluck, Grétry, Paisiello and others could be translated from French or Italian; and lastly new works would be commissioned. The venture began on 17 February 1778 with just such a piece – *Die Bergknappen* (*The Miners*), a one-act *Singspiel* by Ignaz Umlauf.

Mozart undoubtedly knew about this important artistic development, though he was not yet living in Vienna. Instead he spent the whole of 1778 in Germany or France in search of a well-paid permanent position. Nothing attractive materialised, however, and after a sixteen-month absence he went back to Salzburg to take up the position of court organist to his detested former employer, Archbishop Colloredo.

Ironically, it was through Colloredo that Mozart returned for the first time in thirteen years to Vienna, which he thereafter made his home. The Archbishop paid a lengthy visit to the Habsburg capital for Joseph's enthronement in 1781, and required Mozart's attendance in order to show off his musical retinue. Having recently been fêted in Munich on the successful premiere there of his opera *Idomeneo*, Mozart seems to have taken every one of the Archbishop's high-handed actions on this Viennese visit as a calculated insult, and more or less engineered his own dismissal from Colloredo's service in June.

This was the turning point of Mozart's life. Perceiving the possibilities for making money in the Imperial capital, and having fallen in love with Konstanze Weber, he broke with Salzburg and the Archbishop in favour of marriage and a freelance existence. The new interest in German opera shown by the Emperor was undoubtedly a factor in his decision.

Once it had been relayed to his father Leopold in Salzburg (where it was predictably greeted with dismay) Mozart set out to establish himself. A prime mover in the Viennese operatic hierarchy was the actor and writer Johann Gottlieb Stephanie, known as

Stephanie the Younger, who had recently been appointed director of the German National Singspiel. Although Stephanie had a reputation for dishonesty, Mozart was able to report of him to Leopold (1 August 1781) that he had proved a good friend, and had recently handed him a libretto to set to music. 'The text is quite good. The subject is Turkish, and is called *Bellmont and Konstanze, or the Seduction from the Seraglio...*'

Despite Mozart's mistake ('seduction' for 'abduction'), this is the opera we know as *The Seraglio*. As with many other librettos by Stephanie, it is based on someone else's work – in this case a text by Christoph Friedrich Bretzner previously set to music by Johann André and premiered in Berlin on 25 May 1781. Both Stephanie and Mozart hoped that their version would make a splash on the visit of the Grand Duke Paul Petrovich of Russia and his wife, due in mid-September. The visit was postponed, however, and the Emperor subsequently decided to treat the Grand Duke to Gluck instead. Mozart's opera was eventually deferred until the summer of 1782 – no doubt a severe frustration to him, but also an opportunity to insist on substantial changes to the libretto that would enable him to produce a much more ambitious score.

The genre – that of the ‘Turkish subject’, as Mozart referred to it – was not, of course, new. Two of Gluck’s French *opéra comiques* – *Le Cadi dupé* (1761) and *La Rencontre imprévue* (1763), both premiered at the Vienna Burgtheater – were well remembered, and indeed the latter, translated into German, had recently enjoyed a highly successful revival. As Mozart was aware, the *alla turca* style used in these scores went down particularly well with local audiences. It derived from the music played by the so-called janissary bands that accompanied Turkish armies into battle, with kettledrums and cymbals to the fore. Simplified and westernised, it became associated in operatic contexts with Turkish themes, or even with the Orient in general.

Beyond its purely musical appeal, however, the Turkish setting of the opera reflected a growing interest in cultural difference inspired by increasing contacts between east and west. As Brigid Brophy has written, ‘Missionaries set out to Christianise pagans, militarists and merchants to subdue and exploit savages. But from the information they sent back to Europe the message read by Enlightened thought was that pagans and savages might be more moral and more civilised than Christendom.’ Mozart

himself had already explored such possibilities in his unfinished *Singspiel Zaide* (1779–80), which Stephanie had turned down as too serious for the Burgtheater. While the representation of the Turks in *The Seraglio* is clearly not wholly positive, it does contain positive elements – most notably in the work’s final transfiguring gesture. In many respects, the text as a whole presents the kind of Enlightenment agenda that Joseph was keen to promote.

In addition to the chorus, two characters in *The Seraglio* are Turks. The first is the local ruler Pasha Selim, whose role is a non-singing one, as it was also in Bretzner and André’s original. The second is his steward Osmin, a vivid musical creation and a character both comic and menacing. Mozart wrote the role for Ludwig Fischer, the star bass of the company and a great favourite with the public. Osmin presents a negative image of the Turk – dismissive of the rights of women and constantly threatening torture. Even Selim threatens Constanza when she rejects his love – though it is hard not to view his sudden plunge into anger as essentially an excuse for Constanza to sing her grandest and most fiery aria, ‘Tortures unrelenting’, an addition by Stephanie and Mozart to the original text. Yet

his refusal to avenge himself upon the son of the Spaniard who so gravely injured him, and his action in releasing Constanza and her maid Blonda to return to Europe with their respective partners, raises the closing scene of the comedy to its moving and Enlightenment-inspired moral.

Osmin, on the other hand, whirls himself off-stage at the end in an obsessive fit of desire for torture and the death penalty – the latter to be abolished by Joseph just five years later. Earlier, he is routed and rejected by Blonda – an Englishwoman and thus a representative of the nation the Enlightenment considered the most progressive of all. (Constanza, Belmonte and Pedrillo are all Spanish: to add further to the cultural mix, Pedrillo’s serenade ‘In Moorish lands’ naturally has Moorish traits in its melody.) The cultural commentator Edward Said has noted how depictions of the East are often depictions of the West in disguise, and it is apparent that the reactionary attitudes here associated with Turks existed much closer to Joseph’s capital, and were precisely those he was most eager to change.

The Seraglio had its first performance at the Burgtheater on 16 July 1782. The most famous comment made on this occasion may be apocryphal. Mozart’s earliest (1798)

biographer, Franz Xaver Niemetschek, mentions an exchange between emperor and composer. ‘Too beautiful for our ears, my dear Mozart, and monstrous many notes!’ said Joseph, to which Mozart is supposed to have replied, ‘Exactly as many as are necessary, Your Majesty’. Yet there is something in the remark. As in his previous opera, *Idomeneo*, in *The Seraglio* Mozart is revelling in his capabilities, flaunting a richness of idea and decoration that he would eventually pare down to the comparative simplicity of *La clemenza di Tito* and *The Magic Flute*. Nowhere is this more evident than in Constanza’s music. In a letter to his father referring to ‘How I loved him’ Mozart himself explained that he had ‘sacrificed Constanze’s aria a little to the flexible throat of Mlle Cavalieri’ – the company’s star soprano, and almost certainly the mistress of Mozart’s rival Salieri. But even more ornate is ‘Tortures unrelenting’, which includes parts for no less than four obbligato instruments – flute, oboe, violin and cello – within its orchestral accompaniment. Conceived on the grandest of scales, the aria’s form is that of a full-scale concerto first movement, beginning with the regular orchestral exposition of its themes during which the soloist – in this case Constanza –

remains silent. This vast introduction lasts more than two minutes out of an aria in total five times as long, and has proved a headache for stage directors ever since.

Despite Joseph II's criticism (if indeed he made it), *The Seraglio* was well received, with eleven further performances being given in 1782 alone. Between 1783 and 1788 it had thirty more in Vienna's court theatres. It did equally well in Germany, and was the work that made Mozart's name known throughout central Europe. Its first performance in Britain was at Covent Garden on 25 November 1827, when it was sung in English, though with a much altered plot and some new music by Christian Kramer. In 1866 it was translated into Italian and performed at Her Majesty's Theatre: from this version comes the title still sometimes encountered of *Il seraglio*. The first performance of the opera in Italy was actually given as recently as 1935, in Florence. Sir Thomas Beecham revived *The Seraglio*, again in English, at His Majesty's Theatre in 1910, while the British National Opera Company played it at Covent Garden in English during their 1922–23 season. Both Sadler's Wells Opera and its successor English National Opera have performed it regularly. The first production at the New York Met

in 1946 was also in the language of the audience.

The performance presented here, however, derives from a Phoenix Opera production staged at the Bath Festival in 1967. It represented one of Yehudi Menuhin's rare excursions into opera, most of which took place in that city while he was director of its festival. It is notable that Menuhin – a true musical internationalist, born in America of Ukrainian Jewish parents, subsequently a British citizen, and one of the first Western classical musicians to participate in performances of Indian music and jazz – should attack the Turkish music in Mozart's score with such evident relish.

When the recording was made the record company decided to replace Phoenix Opera's original Belmonte with the Swedish tenor Nicolai Gedda, who not only sings the part superbly but with outstanding English diction. Also good to have in permanent form is the Constanza of the American coloratura soprano Mattiwilda Dobbs: other highlights of her career included such roles as Gilda, Oscar and Donizetti's Lucia at the Met. The New Zealand-born bass Noel Mangin was a celebrated Osmin – a part in which he appeared regularly for Sadler's Wells Opera – while the

casting of Blonda gives us an important souvenir of the Australian soprano Jenifer Eddy. The year after making this recording she contracted an illness that sadly ended her singing career: she is now a successful artists' agent. The Pedrillo, John Fryatt, was a member of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company in the 1950s and later appeared in both tenor and baritone roles for Sadler's Wells Opera and subsequently English National Opera.

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Synopsis

The opera is set in the grounds of the Pasha Selim's palace, on the Mediterranean coast of Turkey.

COMPACT DISC ONE

Act I

[1] – [3] Belmonte, a Spanish nobleman, is searching for his beloved Constanza, who has been abducted by pirates. Finding himself outside a palace, he wonders whether it is that of the Pasha Selim and prays that love might lead him to Constanza. [4] – [5] Belmonte questions Osmin, the Pasha's overseer, who ignores him. However, when Belmonte

inquires after Pedrillo, his former servant, Osmin responds angrily and, suspecting that Belmonte has designs on the Pasha's harem, drives him away.

[6] – [7] Osmin mutters about his hatred of Pedrillo, who has ingratiated himself with the Pasha and become a gardener in his service. Pedrillo arrives to ask whether the Pasha has returned from sailing. [8] Osmin leaves angrily and Belmonte emerges, surprised to find Pedrillo there. Pedrillo tells Belmonte that the Pasha bought him from the pirates, along with Constanza and her English maid Blonda (whom Pedrillo loves), and gave Blonda to Osmin; though Constanza has become the Pasha's favourite of all his harem, she has resisted his love. Belmonte says that he has a ship ready for their escape. Pedrillo warns him that it will be difficult to outwit the cunning, ever-watchful Osmin. They decide that, in order to get into the palace, Belmonte will assume the role of a distinguished visiting architect. [9] – [11] Belmonte then expresses his emotion at the prospect of seeing Constanza again.

[12] The Pasha arrives and is greeted by his household. [13] He asks Constanza why she is so sad; he wants her love, but only if she gives it freely. [14] She replies that it is separation

from her beloved that is causing her abject grief; [15] the Pasha is angry but confesses that her resistance makes him desire her even more.

[16] Constanza leaves and Pedrillo introduces Belmonte as an Italian-trained architect. The Pasha agrees to a consultation. Osmin furiously tries to prevent Pedrillo and Belmonte from entering the palace but they finally get past him.

Act II

[17] – [19] Blonda, outraged at Osmin's crude advances, tells him it is tenderness not force that wins affection. He orders her, as his slave, to love him, but she wards him off disdainfully and retorts that she will exploit Constanza's influence over the Pasha to have Osmin punished.

[20] Osmin warns her not to flirt with Pedrillo, [21] – [23] and declares that Englishmen are crazy to allow their women such liberties. Blonda, however, delights in her independent spirit.

[24] – [26] Constanza, wracked with misery, reflects on her past happiness.

COMPACT DISC TWO

[1] Blonda tries to console Constanza with the hope that Belmonte will rescue them. When the Pasha threatens Constanza with torture if she will not love him, she replies that she can

only respect him; [2] she defiantly resists his threats, saying that death is all she has to look forward to and unfaithfulness the only thing she fears. [3] The Pasha is baffled and wonders what he must do to win her.

[4] Pedrillo tells Blonda of Belmonte's arrival and of their plan: the men will bring a ladder to the women's window at midnight, Osmin having been drugged by Pedrillo.

[5] – [6] Blonda is delighted and goes to tell Constanza. [7] Alone, Pedrillo summons his courage for the impending 'battle'. [8] – [9] He persuades the reluctant Osmin to try some wine, and the two men praise Bacchus and women. [10] When Osmin has succumbed to the drink, Pedrillo dispatches him to sleep it off, [11] – [13] thereby giving the lovers a chance to meet. [14] Their ecstatic joy gradually turns sour as Belmonte and Pedrillo accuse the women of infidelity; [15] Constanza is hurt and offended but Blonda is furious. [16] Belmonte and Pedrillo beg forgiveness for their jealousy and there is an amorous reconciliation.

Act III

[17] Belmonte, waiting to put the rescue plan into action, reflects on the power and joy of love. [18] – [19] Pedrillo appears and, as a signal to the women, sings an 'oriental' serenade

about a young knight travelling from afar to rescue a maiden held prisoner in the land of the Moors. [20] Belmonte fetches Constanza and they hurry away while Pedrillo climbs up to rescue Blonda. But Osmin has been alerted and has summoned guards. Pedrillo and Blonda are caught; Belmonte and Constanza have also been captured. [21] Osmin is exultant, relishing the prospect of their torture and execution.

[22] The Pasha confronts Constanza; she admits that in his eyes she is guilty but that she acted out of loyalty to her beloved, for whom she is willing to die. Belmonte pleads for compassion, explaining that he is from a noble Spanish family named Lostados who will pay a large ransom for him. The Pasha realises that Belmonte is the son of his greatest enemy, who drove him from his homeland. He tells the lovers he will mete out the kind of punishment that Belmonte's father would have ordered and leaves them under guard. [23] – [25] Belmonte laments that he has brought Constanza to this, but she blames herself for his destruction; the couple welcome death as the only state in which they can remain together.

[26] The Pasha returns to deliver his judgment. He tells Belmonte to take Constanza and return home: he despises

Belmonte's father too much to imitate him and will repay injustice with clemency. Constanza asks for forgiveness and Pedrillo begs for mercy for him and Blonda, to the outrage of Osmin. [27] All four express their gratitude for the Pasha's benevolence, which is more than Osmin can bear as he describes the tortures he would like to inflict on the foreigners. [28] – [29] Everyone else draws the further moral that nothing is so hateful as revenge and joins in praise of the Pasha.

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Nicolai Gedda is internationally acknowledged as one of the greatest artists of our time and



EMI Records

has been acclaimed for his command of a repertoire which encompasses almost every style and period in the field of opera, oratorio, operetta, song or orchestral works.

Born in Stockholm, the son of a Russian bass and a Swedish mother, he made his professional debut at the Royal Opera Stockholm in 1952 in

Le Postillon de Longjumeau. In the audience was Herbert von Karajan, who immediately engaged him to sing in his recording of Bach's B minor Mass. Thus the year 2002 marks fifty years of recording for Nicolai Gedda. In 1953 he made his debut at La Scala, Milan followed in 1954 by his debut at the Paris Opera 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. 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*.

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, **Mattiwilda Dobbs** began her vocal studies in New York, and also

David Farrell



gained an MA in Spanish. She studied with Lotte Lehmann in California and Pierre Bernac in Paris, and made her debut in 1952 in the title role of Stravinsky's *Le Rossignol* at the Holland Festival. This was followed by appearances in Scandinavian capitals, Belgium, France, Italy and England. At Glyndebourne and The Royal Opera her appearances included Constanze, Zerbinetta, the Queen (*Le Coq d'or*), Gilda, Lucia, Olympia and the Forest Bird (*Siegfried*). Her debut at the Metropolitan Opera, New York, was as Gilda, and subsequent roles there included Lucia, Olympia and Zerlina. She also sang at La Scala, the Paris Opéra and the principal European festivals.

The Australian soprano **Jenifer Eddy** established an impressive career as a coloratura soprano prior to her departure for England, appearing regularly as a soloist for the ABC throughout Australia and in the Australian Opera's 1956/57 season as Susanna, Papagena and Despina.

She made her debut at the Royal Opera

Reg Wilson



House, Covent Garden in 1959, appearing there each season until 1969. She also appeared with English National Opera, Scottish Opera, Welsh National Opera, at most of the major festivals in Great Britain and in Germany, France and Italy. Her roles included Rosina, Norina, Musetta, Olympia, Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), Tytania (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Fiakermilli, Zerbinetta, Despina and Blonda. Her BBC broadcasts and concerts were frequent and she also appeared on BBC television, most notably as Adele in Glen Byam Shaw's production of *Die Fledermaus* and in excerpts from *Don Giovanni* with Tito Gobbi and Sir Geraint Evans. In 1969, she sang Blonda at the Maggio Musicale under Zubin Mehta, before illness forced her to give up her career.

She returned to Australia in 1975 and pioneered the field of artists' management in that country, in the same year founding Jenifer Eddy Artists' Management of which

she remains Managing Director. In 1997 she was awarded a medal in the Order of Australia for services to music.

John Fryatt was born and educated in York and studied singing with Frank Titterton and Joseph Hislop. He was a member of the D'Oyly Carte and Sadler's Wells/English National Opera companies and has been a regular guest artist at Glyndebourne and the

David Farrell



Royal Opera, Covent Garden. His repertoire includes Altoum (*Turandot*) and Goro (*Madam Butterfly*) for English National Opera; Don Basilio (*Le nozze di Figaro*) for Opera Northern Ireland; and

Monsieur Triquet (*Eugene Onegin*) for Glyndebourne Festival Opera. John Fryatt's foreign guest engagements have taken him to Wexford, Hamburg, Bordeaux, Rouen, Palermo, Brussels, Lyon, Chicago, Paris, Nice, Geneva, Lille, Amsterdam, Santa Fe, Vancouver, New York and Monte Carlo.

Recordings include Rev. Horace Adams (*Peter Grimes*), under Richard Hickox for

Chandos, and he has appeared in many television productions and on video recordings of *Orpheus in the Underworld* and *Cox and Box*.

Noel Mangin was born in Wellington, New Zealand, and sang his first solo as a boy soprano at the age of eight. He made his debut as a tenor at the age of twenty-one after



studying with Ernest Drake. He sang as a tenor for three years, before his voice underwent a change, and eighteen months later he emerged as a bass-baritone, singing *Germont Père* (*La traviata*) and *Marcello* (*La bohème*).

By the following year his voice had settled as a bass and he sang the role of Sarastro (*The Magic Flute*). He studied in Paris with Dominique Modesti, and in London with Joseph Hislop, and from 1963–67 he sang with Sadler's Wells Opera. He also made many appearances at the Hamburg Staatsoper, and Victoria State Opera, and from 1979 he regularly sang Fafner, Hunding and Hagen in Seattle Opera's *Ring* productions.

Noel Mangin's most notable roles were Don Pasquale, Ochs and Osmin, and in 1981 he was awarded an OBE. He died in 1995.

David Kelsey, a trained pianist, baritone, and lyric and sketch writer, in addition to being a well-known actor, played the part of Pasha Selim in the Phoenix Opera performances at the Bath Festival in 1967. He appeared at the Lyric Theatre and in revue at the Comedy Theatre in London. He also appeared in a number of productions at the Cheltenham Festival, and toured all over the world, including Europe, Australia (where he also appeared on television), New Zealand and the Far East.

EMI Records



Yehudi Menuhin was born in New York in 1916 and began violin lessons in San Francisco at the age of five. He made such rapid progress that he appeared professionally in San Francisco in 1924, at the age of seven, and gave a full-length recital the following year. He made his New York

debut two years later, and later that year he made his concerto debut playing Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole*. He made his first recording in 1928 and became one of the most recorded artists of the last century. In the 1930s his family moved to Paris, but after his first marriage his principal home was in California. During the Second World War he gave performances for US and Allied troops and in 1944 he was the first artist to appear at the Paris Opéra after the liberation.

In 1947 he was the first Jewish artist to appear with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Furtwängler, and he made a number of recordings with the conductor. After his second marriage, Yehudi Menuhin and his family left the United States and made their homes in London and Gstaad, Switzerland. In 1947, with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, he began his second career, as a conductor, and in England he directed festivals in Bath and

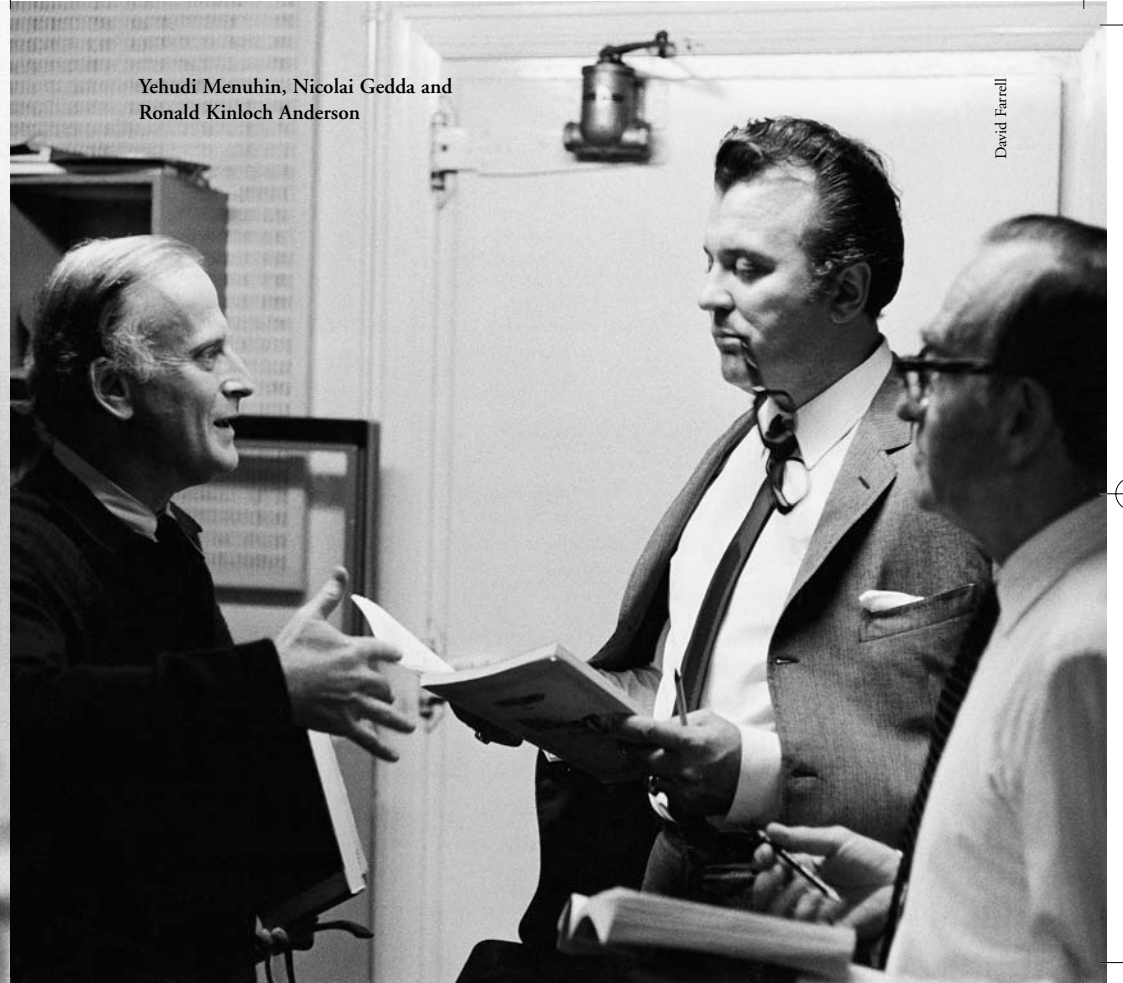
Windsor, as well as an annual festival in Gstaad. In 1959 the Bath Festival Orchestra (later the Menuhin Festival Orchestra) was formed, and it was with this group that he made over 100 recordings.

Amongst the many other things which Yehudi Menuhin achieved were the founding of the Yehudi Menuhin School in Surrey, Live Music Now! (an organisation which sends young professional musicians to play in venues or communities where there are few public concerts), the International Menuhin Academy in Gstaad, and the Menuhin Violin Competition. He was awarded the Royal Philharmonic Society's Gold Medal in 1972, and was made an honorary KBE in 1966. After adopting British citizenship in 1985 he was knighted, in 1987 he was awarded the Order of Merit, and in 1993 he was made a life peer. Yehudi Menuhin died in 1999 while on an orchestral tour in Germany.



Mattiwilda Dobbs and recording
producer Ronald Kinloch Anderson

David Farrell



Yehudi Menuhin, Nicolai Gedda and
Ronald Kinloch Anderson

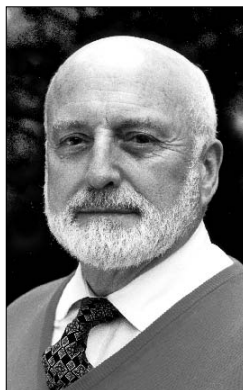
David Farrell

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.



Bill Cooper/PMF

Peter Moores, CBE, DL

Whilst still in his early twenties, Peter Moores had started 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.

Mozart: The Abduction from the Seraglio

Mozarts *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) hat ihren Ursprung in dem Wunsch des Habsburger Kaisers Joseph II., seinen Wiener Untertanen regelmäßig Opern in ihrer eigenen Sprache zu präsentieren.

Joseph II. (1741–1790) war überaus musikalisch und zudem vom Wert des Theaters als Mittel zur Bildung der öffentlichen Meinung überzeugt; es war daher unvermeidlich, daß er das Opernleben in der kaiserlichen Hauptstadt zu beeinflussen suchen würde. Mit dem Tod seines Vaters Franz I. hatte er 1765 die Kaiserwürde übernommen und regierte gemeinsam mit seiner Mutter bis zu deren Tod im Jahr 1780. Einige Jahre zuvor jedoch hatte Maria Theresia ihm die Leitung der beiden Wiener Hoftheater übertragen, die er zu reformieren begann, indem er zunächst das Burgtheater zum Deutschen Nationaltheater erklärte und das Kärntnertheater freien Theatergruppen zugänglich machte. Sein Hauptinteresse galt indes dem erstgenannten, wo von nun an zwei Ensembles – eines aus Schauspielern, das andere aus Sängern bestehend – in der Sprache des Publikums auftraten.

Während die Schauspieltruppe recht leicht zusammenzustellen war, dauerte es länger, mit deutschsprachigen Sängern ein Opernensemble aufzubauen, das einem nichts als das Beste gewöhnten Publikum gerecht wurde. Ein zweites Problem war das Repertoire. Während sich in anderen deutschsprachigen Kulturzentren begrenzte lokale Operntraditionen in der Landessprache entwickelt hatten, gab es nichts dergleichen in Wien, wo bis dahin italienische und französische Opernunternehmen das Feld behauptet hatten. Die Lösung des Problems lag auf drei Ebenen. Zum einen konnten anderswo inszenierte deutsche Werke dem lokalen Geschmack angepaßt werden; daneben konnten populäre Stücke von Gluck, Grétry, Paisiello und anderen aus dem Französischen oder Italienischen übersetzt werden; und schließlich wurden neue Werke in Auftrag gegeben. Das Unternehmen begann am 17. Februar 1778 mit eben einem solchen Stück – *Die Bergknappen*, ein Singspiel in einem Akt von Ignaz Umlauf.

Mozart wußte zweifellos von dieser wichtigen künstlerischen Entwicklung, obwohl

er zu der Zeit noch nicht in Wien lebte. Das ganze Jahr 1778 verbrachte er in Deutschland und Frankreich auf der Suche nach einer gutbezahlten festen Anstellung. Es fand sich jedoch nichts Geeignetes, und Mozart kehrte nach sechzehnmonatiger Abwesenheit nach Salzburg zurück, um bei seinem verachteten früheren Dienstherrn Erzbischof Colloredo die Stellung eines Hoforganisten anzutreten.

Ironischerweise war es Colloredo, dessentwegen Mozart nach dreizehn Jahren zum ersten Mal nach Wien zurückkehrte, wo er sich schließlich niederließ. Der Erzbischof stattete der habsburgischen Hauptstadt anlässlich von Josephs II. Thronbesteigung 1781 einen ausgedehnten Besuch ab und verlangte Mozarts Anwesenheit, um seine musikalische Gefolgschaft zu präsentieren. Mozart, der kurz zuvor anlässlich der erfolgreichen Premiere seiner Oper *Idomeneo* in München gefeiert worden war, scheint jede einzelne der selbtherrlichen Gesten des Erzbischofs als persönliche Beleidigung aufgefaßt zu haben, so daß er seine Entlassung aus den Diensten Colloredos im Juni mehr oder weniger selbst inszenierte.

Dies war der Wendepunkt in Mozarts Leben. Mit der Aussicht, in der kaiserlichen Stadt zu Geld zu kommen, und in Konstanz

Weber verliebt, brach er mit Salzburg und dem Erzbischof zugunsten von Heirat und einer Existenz als freischaffender Musiker. Das neuerwachte Interesse des Kaisers an der deutschen Oper spielte bei dieser Entscheidung zweifellos eine Rolle.

Nachdem er seine Entscheidung seinem Vater Leopold in Salzburg mitgeteilt hatte (wo diese wie zu erwarten mit Bestürzung aufgenommen wurde), machte Mozart sich daran, sich zu etablieren. Ein wesentlicher Faktor in der Wiener Opernhierarchie war der Mime und Autor Johann Gottlieb Stephanie, genannt Stephanie der Jüngere, der kurz zuvor zum Direktor des Deutschen Nationalen Singspiels ernannt worden war. Obwohl Stephanie als unehrlich galt, konnte Mozart seinem Vater am 1. August 1781 berichten, daß er sich als guter Freund erwiesen und ihm kurz zuvor ein Libretto zur Vertonung gegeben habe. – das Buch ist ganz gut. das Sujet ist türkisch und heist; *Bellmont* und *konstanze*. oder *die verführung aus dem Serail*...

Trotz Mozarts Irrtum ("Verführung" anstelle von "Entführung") handelt es sich hier um die uns als *The Abduction from the Seraglio* bekannte Oper. Wie bei zahlreichen anderen Libretti aus der Feder Stephanies basiert auch dieses auf einer fremden Vorlage – hier ein

Text von Christoph Friedrich Bretzner, der von Johann André vertont und am 25. Mai 1781 in Berlin erstaufgeführt wurde. Stephanie und Mozart hofften, daß ihre Fassung bei dem für Mitte September angekündigten Besuch des Großherzogs Paul Petrovich von Rußland und seiner Frau Aufsehen erregen würde. Der Besuch wurde jedoch verschoben, und der Kaiser beschloß daraufhin, den Großherzog stattdessen mit Gluck zu erfreuen. Mozarts Oper wurde schließlich bis zum Sommer 1782 zurückgestellt – zweifellos eine große Enttäuschung für ihn, zugleich aber auch eine Gelegenheit, auf wesentliche Änderungen im Libretto zu bestehen, die es ihm ermöglichten, eine weitaus ambitioniertere Partitur zu erstellen.

Das Genre – das des „türkischen Sujets“, wie Mozart es nannte – war natürlich nicht neu. Zwei von Glucks französischen opéras comiques – *Le Cadi dupé* (1761) und *La Rencontre imprévue* (1763), beide am Wiener Burgtheater erstaufgeführt – waren dem Publikum in guter Erinnerung, und letztere war kurz zuvor in deutscher Übersetzung erfolgreich wiederbelebt worden. Wie Mozart wohl bewußt war, kam der in diesen Werken verwandte *alla-turca*-Stil beim Wiener Publikum besonders gut an. Er leitete sich von der Musik der sogenannten

Janitscharen-Kapellen ab, die, angeführt von Kesseltrommeln und Zimbeln, die türkischen Armeen in die Schlacht geleiteten. In vereinfachter und für westliche Ohren adaptierter Form wurde er in der Oper mit türkischen Themen oder sogar mit dem Orient allgemein in Verbindung gebracht.

Über seinen rein musikalischen Reiz hinaus jedoch reflektierte das türkische Thema der Oper ein durch den zunehmenden Kontakt zwischen Ost und West angeregtes wachsendes Interesse an fremden Kulturen. Wie Brigid Brophy schreibt, „Missionare machten sich auf, die Heiden zu christianisieren, das Militär und der Handel wollten die Wilden unterwerfen und ausbeuten. Doch den nach Europa zurückgesandten Informationen entnahm das aufgeklärte Denken, daß Heiden und Wilde möglicherweise moralischer und zivilisierter waren als die Christenheit.“ Mozart selbst hatte solche Möglichkeiten bereits in seinem unvollendeten Singspiel *Zaide* (1779–80) ausgelotet, das Stephanie als für das Burgtheater zu ernsthaft abgelehnt hatte. Während die Darstellung der Türken in der *Entführung* offensichtlich nicht ausschließlich positiv ist, enthält sie jedoch positive Elemente – besonders in der abschließenden erklärenden Geste des Werks.

In vieler Hinsicht vermittelt der Text als Ganzes die Art aufgeklärter Belange, deren Verbreitung Joseph besonders am Herzen lag.

Neben dem Chor gibt es in der *Entführung* noch zwei weitere türkische Rollen. Die erste ist die des lokalen Herrschers Pascha Selim, wie in der Vorlage von Bretzner und André eine Partie ohne Gesang. Bei der zweiten handelt es sich um seinen Verwalter Osmin, eine lebhaft musikalische Schöpfung und zugleich ein ebenso komischer wie bedrohlicher Charakter. Mozart schrieb diese Rolle für Ludwig Fischer, den Star-Baß des Ensembles und großen Publikumslieblich. Osmin repräsentiert das negative Bild eines Türken, der die Rechte der Frauen mißachtet und ständig mit Folter droht. Selbst Selim bedroht Konstanze, als sie seine Liebe zurückweist – es fällt jedoch schwer, in seinem plötzlichen Wutausbruch mehr als im wesentlichen einen Vorwand für Konstanzes größte und feurigste Arie „Tortures unrelenting“ zu sehen, die Stephanie und Mozart dem ursprünglichen Text später hinzufügten. Doch seine Weigerung, sich an dem Sohn des Spaniers zu rächen, der ihn so sehr verletzt hat, und sein Entschluß, Konstanze und ihre Zofe Blondchen zu befreien und mit ihrem jeweiligen Partner

nach Europa zurückkehren zu lassen, erhebt die Schlußszene der Komödie auf ihre bewegende und aufgeklärte moralische Ebene.

Osmin hingegen stürzt am Ende von der Bühne, besessen auf der Suche nach Folter und Todesstrafe – die nur fünf Jahre später von Joseph II. abgeschafft werden sollte. Zuvor muß er die Zurückweisung und Vertreibung durch Blonde hinnehmen, die Engländerin und damit eine Repräsentantin der Nation ist, die in der Aufklärung als besonders fortschrittlich galt. (Konstanze, Belmonte und Pedrillo sind Spanier; und die kulturelle Mixtur wird durch Pedrillos Serenade „In Moorish lands“ noch ergänzt, deren Musik natürlich maurische Elemente enthält. Der Kulturhistoriker Edward Said hat bemerkt, wie die Darstellungen des Orients oft verhüllte Darstellungen des Westens sind, und offensichtlich waren die hier mit Türken in Verbindung gebrachten reaktionären Einstellungen in Wahrheit viel näher an Josephs Regierungssitz angesiedelt, und eben diese trachtete er zu verändern.

Die Entführung erlebte ihre erste Aufführung am 16. Juli 1782 im Burgtheater. Der berühmteste Kommentar dieses Ereignisses ist möglicherweise apokryph.

Mozarts frühester (1798) Biograph Franz Xaver Niemetschek erwähnt einen Dialog zwischen Kaiser und Komponist: "Gewaltig viel Noten lieber Mozart!", sagte Joseph, worauf Mozart erwidert haben soll: "Gerade so viel, Eure Majestät, als nöthig ist". Doch es ist etwas Wahres an dieser Bemerkung. Wie in seiner vorangehenden Oper *Idomeneo* schwelgt Mozart auch in der *Entführung* in seinen Fähigkeiten und stellt einen Reichtum an Gedanken und Verzierung zur Schau, den er erst später auf die relative Einfachheit von *La clemenza di Tito* und der *Zauberflöte* reduzieren sollte. Dies wird nirgendwo so deutlich wie in Konstanzes Musik. In einem Brief an seinen Vater (26. September 1781), der sich auf "How I loved him" bezieht, erklärte Mozart selbst, er habe "die aria von der konstanze ... ein wenig der geläufigen gurgel der Mad.selle Cavallieri aufgeopfert"; gemeint ist die Starsopranistin des Ensembles, die mit großer Wahrscheinlichkeit die Geliebte von Mozarts Rivalen Salieri war. Noch reicher ausgearbeitet ist allerdings die Arie "Tortures unrelenting", die, eingebettet in die Orchesterbegleitung, Partien für nicht weniger als vier obligate Instrumente – Flöte, Oboe, Violine und Violoncello – enthält. Die Form der außerordentlich groß angelegten Arie ist

die eines ausgewachsenen Konzert-Kopfsatzes, beginnend mit der üblichen Orchesterexposition der Themen, während der der Solist – in diesem Fall Konstanze – schweigt. Diese ausgedehnte Einleitung dauert mehr als zwei Minuten der insgesamt fünfmal so langen Arie und hat Regisseure seit jeher Kopfzerbrechen bereitet.

Trotz der Kritik Josephs II. (falls er diese wirklich äußerte) wurde die *Entführung* positiv aufgenommen und brachte es allein im Jahr 1782 auf elf weitere Darbietungen. Zwischen 1783 und 1788 gab es an den Wiener Hoftheatern dreißig Aufführungen. Auch in Deutschland war das Stück erfolgreich, und es war diese Oper, die Mozarts Namen in ganz Mitteleuropa bekannt machte. Die erste britische Aufführung fand am 25. November 1827 in Covent Garden statt, wo das Werk in englischer Sprache gesungen wurde, allerdings mit stark geänderter Handlung und einigen neuen Sätzen von Christian Kramer. 1866 wurde das Stück ins Italienische übersetzt und im Theater ihrer Majestät aufgeführt; von dieser Fassung stammt der heute noch gelegentlich verwendete Titel *Il Seraglio*. Die erste Darbietung der Oper in Italien fand erst 1935 in Florenz statt. Sir Thomas Beecham gab sie erneut 1910 in englischer Sprache im

Theater seiner Majestät, während die British National Opera Company sie in der Spielzeit 1922/23 ebenfalls auf Englisch in Covent Garden aufführte. Auch die Sadler's Wells Opera und ihre Nachfolgeorganisation English National Opera haben das Stück regelmäßig in ihren Spielplan aufgenommen. Die erste Produktion an der New Yorker Met im Jahr 1946 fand ebenfalls in der Sprache des Publikums statt.

Die hier präsentierte Einspielung basiert auf einer Inszenierung der Phoenix Opera während des Bath Festivals 1967. Sie bildet eine von Yehudi Menuhins seltenen Exkursionen auf das Gebiet der Oper, von denen die meisten während seiner Zeit als künstlerischer Leiter des Bath Festivals stattfanden. Es ist bemerkenswert, daß Menuhin – ein echter musikalischer Internationalist, als Sohn ukrainischer jüdischer Eltern in Amerika geboren, später britischer Staatsbürger und einer der ersten klassischen Musiker des westlichen Kulturkreises, die an Aufführungen von indischer Musik und Jazz teilnahmen – die türkische Musik in Mozarts Werk mit solch offensichtlichem Vergnügen anging.

Als die Aufnahme gemacht wurde, entschied die Plattenfirma, den ursprünglichen

Belmonte des Phoenix-Opera-Ensembles durch den schwedischen Tenor Nicolai Gedda zu ersetzen, der den Part nicht nur hervorragend singt, sondern zudem auch über eine exzellente englische Aussprache verfügt. Auch ist es gut, die durch den amerikanischen Koloratursopran Mattiwilda Dobbs interpretierte Partie der Konstanze verewigt zu finden; zu weiteren Höhepunkten ihrer Karriere zählen die Rollen von Gilda, Oscar und Donizettis Lucia an der Met. Der aus Neuseeland stammende Baß Noel Mangin war ein gefeierter Osmin – eine Rolle, in der er regelmäßig an der Sadler's Wells Opera auftrat. Die Besetzung der Blondchen erhält uns eine wichtige Erinnerung an den australischen Sopran Jenifer Eddy; ein Jahr nach dieser Aufnahme erzwang eine Erkrankung das Ende ihrer Gesangskarriere, heute ist sie eine erfolgreiche Künstleragentin. Der Pedrillo John Fryatt war in den 1950er Jahren Mitglied der D'Oyly Carte Opera Company und trat später als Tenor wie auch als Bariton an der Sadler's Wells Opera und späteren English National Opera auf.

Handlung

Die Oper spielt in der Palastanlage des Paschas Selim, an der türkischen Mittelmeerküste.

COMPACT DISC ONE

1. Akt

[1] – [3] Belmonte, ein spanischer Adliger, sucht seine geliebte Konstanze, die von Piraten entführt worden ist. Er befindet sich vor einem Palast, fragt sich, ob dieser dem Pascha Selim gehöre, und betet, die Liebe möge ihn zu Konstanze führen. [4] – [5] Belmonte befragt Osmin, den Aufseher des Paschas, der ihn jedoch nicht beachtet. Als Belmonte aber nach Pedrillo, seinem ehemaligen Diener fragt, antwortet Osmin verärgert und jagt Belmonte, den er verdächtigt, hinter dem Harem des Paschas her zu sein, fort.

[6] – [7] Osmin murrte über seinen Haß gegen Pedrillo, der sich beim Pascha eingeschmeichelt hat und in dessen Diensten Gärtner geworden ist. Pedrillo trifft ein, um zu fragen, ob der Pascha vom Segeln zurückgekehrt sei. [8] Osmin geht verärgert fort, Belmonte erscheint und ist überrascht, Pedrillo zu sehen. Dieser erzählt Belmonte, daß der Pascha ihn, zusammen mit Konstanze und deren englischen (von Pedrillo geliebten)

Kammerzofe Blondchen, von den Piraten gekauft und Blondchen Osmin geschenkt habe. Konstanze sei zwar im Harem die Favoritin des Paschas geworden, erwidere aber dessen Liebe nicht. Belmonte sagt, daß ein Schiff zu ihrer Flucht bereit sei. Pedrillo warnt ihn, daß es schwierig sein werde, den gewieften, stets wachsamen Osmin zu überlisten. Sie beschließen, daß Belmonte, um überhaupt Zugang zu dem Palast zu erlangen, in die Rolle eines renommierten Gastarchitekten schlüpfen soll. [9] – [11] Anschließend verleiht Belmonte seinen Gefühlen ob des bevorstehenden Wiedersehens mit Konstanze Ausdruck.

[12] Der Pascha tritt auf und wird von seinem gesamten Haushalt begrüßt. [13] Er fragt Konstanze, warum sie so traurig sei; er möchte ihre Liebe, aber nur wenn sie sie freiwillig schenkt. [14] Sie antwortet, daß sie aufgrund der Trennung von ihrem Geliebten von großer Trauer erfüllt ist. [15] Daraufhin ist der Pascha zwar verärgert, räumt aber ein, daß ihr Widerstand sein Verlangen nur noch steigert.

[16] Konstanze geht ab, und Pedrillo stellt Belmonte als einen in Italien ausgebildeten Architekten vor. Der Pascha willigt in eine Unterredung ein. Wütentbrannt versucht

Osmin Pedrillo und Belmonte am Betreten des Palastes zu hindern, doch schließlich gelingt es ihnen, an ihm vorbeizukommen.

2. Akt

[17] – [19] Blondchen empört sich über Osmins plumpe Annäherungsversuche und sagt ihm, nicht mit Gewalt sondern durch Zärtlichkeit gewinne man Liebe. Er befiehlt ihr als seiner Sklavin, ihn zu lieben, sie wehrt ihn jedoch verächtlich ab und erwidert, daß sie Konstanzes Einfluß auf den Pascha ausnutzen werde, um Osmin bestrafen zu lassen.

[20] Osmin warnt sie davor, mit Pedrillo zu liebäugeln, [21] – [23] und behauptet, die Engländer seien verrückt, ihren Frauen solche Freiheiten zuzugestehen. Blondchen jedoch genießt ihren unabhängigen Geist.

[24] – [25] Konstanze, von Leid gebrochen, denkt an ihr früheres Glück zurück.

COMPACT DISC TWO

[1] Blondchen versucht sie mit der Hoffnung auf eine Rettung durch Belmonte zu trösten. Als der Pascha Konstanze mit Folter droht, sollte sie ihm weiter ihre Liebe verweigern, antwortet sie, daß sie ihn lediglich respektieren kann. [2] Trotzig widersteht sie seinen

Drohungen und sagt, daß sie sich allein auf den Tod freue und nur die Treulosigkeit fürchte. [3] Der Pascha ist ratlos und überlegt, was er noch tun muß, um sie zu gewinnen.

[4] Pedrillo informiert Blondchen über die Ankunft Belmontes und ihren Plan: Die Männer werden um Mitternacht eine Leiter zum Fenster der beiden Frauen bringen, nachdem Osmin von Pedrillo betäubt worden ist. [5] – [6] Blondchen freut sich und will es Konstanze erzählen. [7] Einmal allein rafft Pedrillo für den bevorstehenden "Kampf" seinen ganzen Mut zusammen. [8] – [9] Er überredet den widerwilligen Osmin, etwas Wein zu probieren, und die beiden Männer singen einen Lobgesang auf Bacchus und die Frauen. [10] Als die Trunkenheit Osmin übermannt, schickt ihn Pedrillo weg, um seinen Rausch auszuschlafen, [11] – [13] so daß die Liebenden sich treffen können. [14] Ihre ekstatische Freude schlägt jedoch um, als Belmonte und Pedrillo die Frauen der Untreue bezichtigen. [15] Konstanze ist verletzt und beleidigt, Blondchen dagegen wütend. [16] Belmonte und Pedrillo flehen um Verzeihung für ihre Eifersucht, und alle Mißverständnisse lösen sich in einer liebenden Versöhnung auf.

3. Akt

[17] Belmonte, der darauf wartet, die Rettungsaktion in die Tat umzusetzen, denkt über die Macht und die Freude der Liebe nach. [18] – [19] Pedrillo erscheint und singt als Signal für die Frauen ein “orientalisches” Ständchen über einen jungen Ritter, der aus fernen Landen anreist, um ein im Land der Mooren gefangengehaltenes Mägdelein zu erretten. [20] Belmonte holt Konstanze, und sie eilen davon, während Pedrillo emporklettert, um Blondchen zu retten. Osmin hat jedoch Verdacht geschöpft und die Wachen gerufen. Pedrillo und Blondchen werden erwischt; Belmonte und Konstanze sind ebenfalls gefangen worden. [21] Osmin ist hochofrenet und genießt die Vorfriede auf ihre bevorstehende Folter und Hinrichtung.

[22] Der Pascha stellt Konstanze zur Rede. Sie gesteht, in seinen Augen schuldig zu sein, beteuert aber, aus Treue zu ihrem Geliebten, für den sie zu sterben bereit sei, gehandelt zu haben. Belmonte fleht um Mitleid und erklärt, daß er aus einer adligen spanischen Familie namens Lostados stamme, die ein hohes Lösegeld für ihn bezahlen werde. Dem Pascha wird klar, daß Belmonte der Sohn seines größten Feindes ist, der ihn aus seiner Heimat

vertrieben hat. Er sagt den Liebenden, er werde die gleiche Art von Strafe austreten, die auch Belmontes Vater gewählt hätte, und läßt sie weiter bewachen. [23] – [25] Belmonte beklagt, Konstanze zu ihrem Tode geführt zu haben, doch sie gibt sich die Schuld für seinen Untergang. Das Paar begrüßt den Tod als die einzige Art und Weise zusammen bleiben zu können.

[26] Der Pascha kommt zurück, um sein Urteil zu fällen. Er sagt Belmonte, er solle mit Konstanze nach Hause zurückkehren: Er verachtet Belmontes Vater zu sehr, um ihn nachzuahmen, und will stattdessen Ungerechtigkeit mit Milde vergelten. Konstanze bittet um Vergebung, und Pedrillo fleht um Gnade für sich und Blondchen, was Osmin vollends empört. [27] Alle vier bringen ihre Dankbarkeit für die Barmherzigkeit des Paschas zum Ausdruck, und dies ist mehr als Osmin, der die Qualen, die er den Fremden zufügen möchte, beschreibt, ertragen kann. [28] – [29] Alle anderen einigen sich darauf, daß nichts so abscheulich sei, wie die Rache, und preisen gemeinsam den Pascha.

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Übersetzung: Bettina Reinke-Welsh

Nicolai Gedda ist international als einer der größten Künstler unserer Zeit anerkannt und wurde für seine Beherrschung eines Repertoires gefeiert, das nahezu jeden Stil und jede Epoche in Oper, Oratorium, Operette, Lied und Orchesterwerk umfaßt.

Der in Stockholm gebürtige Sohn eines russischen Bassisten und einer schwedischen Mutter feierte sein Debut 1952 an der Königlichen Oper Stockholm in *Le Postillon de Longjumeau*. Im Publikum befand sich damals Herbert von Karajan, der ihn umgehend für seine Aufnahme von Bachs H-Moll-Messe engagierte. Somit kann Nicolai Gedda 2002 auf fünfzig Jahre Aufnahmetätigkeit zurückblicken. 1953 hatte er sein Debut an der Mailänder Scala, gefolgt 1954 von ersten Auftritten an der Pariser Oper und 1957 an der Metropolitan Opera (in der Titelrolle von Gounods *Faust*). Seit seinem Debut an der Royal Opera 1965 (als Herzog von Mantua in Verdis *Rigoletto*) hat er dort Benvenuto Cellini, Alfredo, Gustavus III in *Un ballo in maschera*, Nemorino und Lensky gesungen. An der Metropolitan Opera schuf er führende Rollen in Barbers *Vanessa* und Menottis *The Last Savage*.

Seine Operntriumphe erstrecken sich von den Werken Haydns und Mozarts bis hin zu

Stravinsky, Orff, Barber und Menotti, und in Recitals wird er als herausragender Lied-Interpret geschätzt. Außerdem zeichnet er sich dadurch aus, mit 200 Einspielungen der meistaufgenommene Tenor zu sein. Hierzu zählen vollständige Opernaufführungen von *Wilhelm Tell*, *La Bohème*, *Faust*, *Werther*, *Manon*, *Così fan tutte* und *Benvenuto Cellini*.

Mattiwilda Dobbs wurde in Atlanta (Georgia) geboren und begann ihre Gesangsstudien in New York; daneben erwarb sie einen M.A. in Spanisch. Sie studierte bei Lotte Lehmann in Kalifornien und bei Pierre Bernac in Paris und feierte 1952 ihr Debut in der Titelrolle von Stravinskys *Le Rossignol* auf dem Holland-Festival. Es folgten Auftritte in skandinavischen Hauptstädten, Belgien, Frankreich, Italien und England. Zu ihren Rollen in Glyndebourne und an der Royal Opera zählten Constanze, Zerbinetta und die Königin (*Le Coq d'or*), Gilda, Lucia, Olympia und der Waldvogel (*Siegfried*). Ihr Debut an der New Yorker Metropolitan Opera hatte sie in der Rolle der Gilda, später trat sie dort auch als Lucia, Olympia und Zerlina auf. Außerdem sang sie an der Scala, der Pariser Opéra und den großen europäischen Festivals.

Die australische Sopranistin **Jenifer Eddy** begründete ihre eindrucksvolle Karriere als Koloratursopran bereits vor ihrer Übersiedlung nach England; sie trat regelmäßig als Solistin bei der ABC (Australischer Rundfunk) auf sowie als Susanna, Papagena und Despina in der Saison 1956/57 an der Australian Opera.

Ihr Debut am Royal Opera House in Covent Garden feierte sie 1959 und trat dort bis 1969 in jeder Spielzeit auf. Sie sang zudem an der English National Opera, der Scottish Opera, der Welsh National Opera sowie auf den meisten größeren Festivals in Großbritannien, Deutschland, Frankreich und Italien. Zu ihren Rollen zählen Rosina, Norina, Musetta, Olympia, Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), Tytania (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Fiakermilli, Zerbinetta, Despina und Blondchen. Hinzu kommen zahlreiche Sendungen und Konzerte bei Radio BBC sowie beim BBC-Fernsehen, besonders als Adele in Glen Byam Shaws Inszenierung der *Fledermaus* und in Auszügen von *Don Giovanni* mit Tito Gobbi und Sir Geraint Evans. Nachdem sie 1969 an der Maggio Musicale unter Zubin Mehta die Rolle des Blondchen sang, zwang eine Erkrankung sie

zur Aufgabe ihrer Karriere.

1975 kehrte sie nach Australien zurück und beschritt in ihrem Heimatland neue Wege im Bereich der Künstlervermittlung; im selben Jahr gründete sie "Jenifer Eddy Artists' Management", dessen Geschäftsführerin sie bis heute ist. 1997 wurde ihr in Anerkennung ihrer Verdienste um die Musik eine Medaille des Order of Australia verliehen.

John Fryatt stammt aus York, wo er auch aufwuchs, und studierte Gesang bei Frank Titterton und Joseph Hislop. Er war Mitglied des D'Oyly Carte und des Sadler's Wells/English National Opera Ensembles sowie regelmäßiger Gast in Glyndebourne und an der Royal Opera in Covent Garden. Sein Repertoire umfaßt Altoum (*Turandot*) und Goro (*Madam Butterfly*) für die English National Opera, Don Basilio (*Le nozze di Figaro*) für Opera Northern Ireland und Monsieur Triquet (*Eugen Onegin*) für die Glyndebourne Festival Opera. Ausländische Gastauftritte haben John Fryatt nach Wexford, Hamburg, Bordeaux, Rouen, Palermo, Brüssel, Lyon, Chicago, Paris, Nizza, Genf, Lille, Amsterdam, Santa Fe, Vancouver, New York und Monte Carlo geführt.

Für Chandos hat er den Reverend Horace

Adams (*Peter Grimes*) unter Richard Hickox aufgenommen, außerdem ist er in zahlreichen Fernsehproduktionen aufgetreten und erscheint auf Videoaufnahmen von *Orpheus in der Unterwelt* und *Cox and Box*.

Noel Mangin wurde in Wellington in Neuseeland geboren und sang sein erstes Solo als Knabensopran im Alter von acht Jahren. Sein Debut als Tenor feierte der 21jährige nach Studien bei Ernest Drake. Nachdem er drei Jahre als Tenor gesungen hatte, veränderte sich seine Stimme, und 18 Monate später trat er als Baßbariton in den Rollen des Germont Père (*La traviata*) und des Marcello (*La Bohème*) auf. Im darauffolgenden Jahr hatte seine Stimme das Niveau eines Basses erreicht, und er sang die Rolle des Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*). Er studierte bei Dominique Modesti in Paris und bei Joseph Hislop in London und wirkte von 1963 bis 1967 an der Sadler's Wells Opera. Außerdem trat er häufig an der Hamburger Staatsoper und der Victoria State Opera auf und sang ab 1979 regelmäßig den Fafner, Hunding und Hagen in Inszenierungen von Wagners *Ring* an der Seattle Opera.

Noel Mangins bekannteste Rollen waren die des Don Pasquale, Ochs und Osmin, und 1981 wurde er mit einem OBE ausgezeichnet.

Er starb 1995.

David Kelsey, ein ausgebildeter Pianist, Bariton, Lyriker und Autor von Sketchen sowie Schauspieler, verkörperte in den Aufführungen der Phoenix Opera auf dem Bath Festival 1967 die Rolle des Pascha Selim. In London trat er am Lyric Theatre und in Revuen am Comedy Theatre auf. Außerdem wirkte er bei einer Reihe von Produktionen des Cheltenham Festival mit, und Gastspiele führten ihn in die ganze Welt, nach Europa, Australien (wo er auch im Fernsehen auftrat), Neuseeland und in den fernen Osten.

Yehudi Menuhin wurde 1916 in New York geboren und nahm schon mit fünf Jahren in San Francisco Violinunterricht. Er machte solch große Fortschritte, daß er bereits als Siebenjähriger 1924 in San Francisco professionell auftrat und im darauffolgenden Jahr ein abendfüllendes Recital gab. Sein New Yorker Debut feierte er zwei Jahre später, und noch im selben Jahr trat er mit Lalos *Symphonie espagnole* zum ersten Mal solistisch mit einem Orchester auf. Seine erste Aufnahme machte er 1928 und wurde einer der am meisten eingespielten Künstler des vergangenen Jahrhunderts. In den 1930er Jahren zog seine Familie nach Paris, doch nach

seiner ersten Heirat war sein Hauptwohnsitz Kalifornien. Im zweiten Weltkrieg spielte er in Konzerten für die amerikanischen und alliierten Truppen, und 1944 trat er als erster Künstler nach der Befreiung in der Pariser Opéra auf.

1947 trat er als erster jüdischer Künstler mit den Berliner Philharmonikern unter Furtwängler auf, mit dem er auch eine Reihe von Plattenaufnahmen einspielte. Nach seiner zweiten Heirat verließen Yehudi Menuhin und seine Familie die Vereinigten Staaten und lebten in London und Gstaad in der Schweiz. 1947 begann er mit dem Dallas Symphony Orchestra seine zweite Karriere als Dirigent; in England dirigierte er auf den Festivals in Bath und Windsor, ferner auf einem jährlich stattfindenden Festival in Gstaad. 1959 wurde das Bath Festival Orchestra (das spätere Menuhin Festival Orchestra) gegründet, mit

dem er über 100 Plattenaufnahmen einspielte.

Zu den vielen anderen Dingen, die Yehudi Menuhin bewirkte, zählt die Gründung der Yehudi Menuhin School in Surrey, England, "Live Music Now!" (eine Organisation, die junge professionelle Musiker an Veranstaltungsreihen oder Gemeinden vermittelt, wo es nur wenige öffentliche Konzerte gibt), der International Menuhin Academy in Gstaad und des Menuhin Violin-Wettbewerbs. 1972 wurde ihm die Goldmedaille der Royal Philharmonic Society verliehen, und 1966 ehrte man ihn mit der Ernennung zum KBE. Nachdem er 1985 die britische Staatsbürgerschaft angenommen hatte, wurde er zum Ritter geschlagen, 1987 wurde er mit dem Order of Merit (Verdienstorden) ausgezeichnet, und 1993 wurde er zum Peer auf Lebenszeit erhoben. Yehudi Menuhin starb 1999 während einer Orchestertournee in Deutschland.



Jenifer Eddy, Noel Mangin, Yehudi Menuhin,
Nicolai Gedda, Mattiwilda Dobbs and John Fryatt

Mozart: The Abduction from the Seraglio

L'origine de *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) de Mozart se trouve dans le désir de l'empereur Joseph II de Habsbourg de présenter à ses sujets viennois des saisons régulières d'opéras chantés dans leur propre langue, l'allemand.

Très musicien lui-même, Joseph II (1741–1790) était également convaincu de la valeur du théâtre comme moyen d'orienter l'opinion publique, aussi était-il inévitable qu'il cherchât à influencer la vie de l'opéra de la capitale impériale. Ayant assumé le titre d'empereur à la mort de son père François Ier en 1765, il régna avec sa mère Marie-Thérèse d'Autriche jusqu'à la mort de celle-ci en 1780. Quelques années avant sa disparition, Marie-Thérèse lui avait confié la direction des deux théâtres de la cour de Vienne. Il entreprit alors de les réformer, déclarant le Burgtheater Théâtre national allemand, et mettant le Kärntnertheater à la disposition de compagnies non subventionnées. Il s'intéressa essentiellement au Burgtheater où deux troupes, l'une d'acteurs et l'autre de chanteurs, se produiraient dans la langue du public présent dans la salle.

Si la compagnie d'acteurs fut relativement facile à mettre sur pied, il fallut davantage de temps pour constituer une troupe d'opéra chantant en allemand qui soit digne d'un public habitué à la plus haute qualité. Un autre problème fut celui du répertoire. Malgré quelques traditions locales d'opéras chantés en allemand dans d'autres centres de langue germanique, il n'en existait presque aucune à Vienne où les compagnies de langue française et italienne avaient jusque-là dominé. La réponse était triple. Premièrement, des œuvres allemandes produites ailleurs pouvaient être adaptées au goût local; deuxièmement, des œuvres populaires de compositeurs tels que Gluck, Grétry ou Paisiello pouvaient être traduites du français ou de l'italien; enfin, de nouvelles œuvres pouvaient être commandées. L'aventure commença le 17 février 1778 avec une pièce de ce genre, *Die Bergknappen* (Les Mineurs), un *Singspiel* en un acte de Ignaz Umlauf.

Bien qu'il ne vivait pas encore à Vienne, Mozart était sans aucun doute au courant de ce développement artistique important. Il passa toute l'année 1778 en Allemagne et en

France à la recherche d'un emploi permanent bien payé. Mais rien d'intéressant ne se concrétisa, et après seize mois d'absence il retourna à Salzbourg pour prendre le poste d'organiste de la cour de son ancien employeur qu'il détestait, l'archevêque Colloredo.

Ironiquement, c'est grâce à Colloredo que Mozart revint à Vienne pour la première fois en treize ans, et où il allait s'installer par la suite. L'archevêque fit en effet une longue visite dans la capitale Habsbourg pour le couronnement de Joseph II en 1781, et il exigea la présence de Mozart afin d'exhiber son escorte musicale. Ayant récemment été fêté à Munich où la création de son opéra *Idomeneo* remporta un vif succès, Mozart semble avoir interprété chacun des actes despotiques de l'archevêque pendant cette visite viennoise comme une insulte calculée, et il provoqua plus ou moins son propre licenciement au mois de juin.

Cet événement fut le tournant de la carrière de Mozart. Percevant les possibilités de gagner de l'argent dans la capitale impériale, et étant tombé amoureux de Konstanze Weber, il rompit avec Salzbourg et l'archevêque, leur préférant le mariage et une existence professionnelle indépendante. Le nouvel intérêt porté par l'empereur à l'opéra allemand

fut sans aucun doute un facteur déterminant dans sa décision.

Après avoir informé son père Leopold à Salzbourg (cette nouvelle le consterna comme on pouvait s'y attendre), Mozart chercha les moyens de s'établir à Vienne. Récemment nommé directeur du Théâtre national allemand, l'acteur et écrivain Johann Gottlieb Stephanie, connu sous le nom de Stephanie le Jeune, était l'un des personnages influents de la hiérarchie du milieu de l'opéra viennois. Bien que Stephanie fût réputé malhonnête, Mozart put rapporter à Leopold (lettre du 1er août 1781) qu'il s'était montré un ami bon, et lui avait récemment confié un livret à mettre en musique. "Le texte est excellent. Le sujet est turc, et s'intitule *Bellmont et Konstanze, ou la Séduction au sérail...*"

Malgré l'erreur de Mozart ("séduction" pour "enlèvement"), il s'agit bien de l'opéra *The Abduction from the Seraglio* que nous connaissons. Comme pour tant d'autres livrets de Stephanie, celui-ci s'inspire de l'œuvre d'un autre. Il se fonde sur un texte de Christoph Friedrich Bretzner précédemment mis en musique par Johann André, et créé à Berlin le 25 mai 1781. Stephanie et Mozart espéraient que leur version ferait sensation lors de la visite du grand-duc Paul Pétrovitch de Russie

et de son épouse, prévue à la mi-septembre. Mais la visite étant différée, Joseph II décida par la suite de présenter au grand-duc un opéra de Gluck, et la création de l'œuvre de Mozart fut repoussée jusqu'à l'été 1782. Bien que ce retard fût sans aucun doute une grande frustration pour Mozart, il lui donna cependant l'occasion de pouvoir insister sur des modifications importantes dans le livret lui permettant de réaliser une partition beaucoup plus ambitieuse.

Le genre – le “sujet turc” décrit par Mozart – n'était bien entendu pas nouveau. Tout le monde se souvenait encore de deux opéras comiques français de Gluck créés au Burgtheater de Vienne, *Le Cadi dupé* (1761) et *La Rencontre imprévue* (1763). Traduit en allemand, ce dernier avait même été récemment rejoué avec un très vif succès. Mozart avait conscience que le style *alla turca* utilisé dans ces partitions était particulièrement bien accueilli par le public local. Il dérivait de la musique jouée par les soldats d'infanterie qui accompagnaient les armées turques à la bataille, avec timbales et cymbales en première ligne. Simplifié et adapté à la mode occidentale, ce style devint associé dans le milieu de l'opéra avec les thèmes turcs, voire avec l'Orient en général.

Cependant, au-delà de sa pure séduction musicale, le contexte turc de l'opéra reflétait un intérêt grandissant pour les différences culturelles inspiré par les contacts de plus en plus nombreux entre l'Orient et l'Occident. Comme l'a écrit Brigid Brophy: “Les missionnaires partirent pour aller christianiser les païens, les militaristes et les marchands pour soumettre et exploiter les sauvages. Mais à partir des informations qu'ils envoyèrent en Europe, le message lu par la pensée des Lumières fut que les païens et les sauvages pourraient bien être plus moraux et plus civilisés que la chrétienté.” Mozart avait déjà exploité de telles possibilités dans son *Singspiel* inachevé, *Zaide* (1779–1780), que Stephanie avait refusé comme étant beaucoup trop sérieux pour le public du Burgtheater. S'il est clair que dans *The Abduction from the Seraglio* la représentation des Turcs n'est pas entièrement positive, l'opéra contient cependant des éléments qui le sont – le plus notable étant le geste final transfigurant l'œuvre. A bien des égards, le texte dans son ensemble présente le genre de programme attaché à la pensée des “Lumières” que Joseph II souhaitait promouvoir.

Outre le chœur, deux des personnages de *The Abduction from the Seraglio* sont Turcs. Le

premier est le monarque local, le pacha Sélim, dont le rôle est parlé comme dans l'original de Bretzner et d'André. Le second est le gardien de son sérail, Osmin, une création musicale pleine de vie, et un personnage à la fois comique et menaçant. Mozart écrit le rôle pour Ludwig Fisher, la basse vedette de la compagnie, et un grand favori du public. Osmin présente une image négative du Turc – ne faisant aucun cas des droits de la Femme, et brandissant constamment la menace de la torture. Même Selim menace Constanze quand elle repousse ses avances – il est cependant difficile de ne pas voir sa colère soudaine comme une excuse donnée à Constanze pour chanter sa plus grande et sa plus fougueuse aria, “Tortures unrelenting”, une addition de Stephanie et de Mozart au texte original. Malgré cela, son refus de se venger sur le fils de l'Espagnol qui l'a si gravement offensé, et le fait qu'il laisse Constanze et sa servante Blonde retourner en Europe avec leurs partenaires respectifs, élève la scène finale de la comédie à son émouvante morale inspirée de l'esprit des “Lumières”.

Osmin, d'autre part, se précipite hors de scène à la fin en proie à un désir furieux de torture et de peine de mort – cette dernière sera abolie cinq ans plus tard par Joseph II.

Plus tôt, il est mis en déroute et repoussé par Blonde – une Anglaise, et donc une représentante de la nation considérée comme étant la plus progressive par les penseurs des “Lumières”. (Constanze, Belmonte et Pedrillo sont tous de nationalité espagnole: pour ajouter encore davantage au mélange culturel, la sérénade de Pedrillo, “In Moorish lands”, possède naturellement dans sa mélodie des caractéristiques moresques. Le commentateur culturel Edward Said a noté combien les représentations de l'Orient sont souvent des représentations déguisées de l'Occident, et il est clair que les attitudes réactionnaires associées ici avec les Turcs existaient de manière beaucoup plus proche de la capitale de Joseph II, et étaient précisément celles qu'il désirait le plus changer.

The Abduction from the Seraglio fut créé au Burgtheater le 16 juillet 1782. Le commentaire le plus célèbre fait à cette occasion est peut-être apocryphe. Le premier biographe de Mozart (1798), Franz Xaver Niemetschek, mentionne un échange entre Joseph II et le compositeur. “Trop beau pour nos oreilles, mon cher Mozart, et beaucoup trop de notes!”, déclara l'empereur. Mozart lui aurait répondu: “Exactement autant qu'il est nécessaire, Votre Majesté.” Toutefois, cette

remarque indique quelque chose. Comme dans son opéra précédent, *Idomeneo*, Mozart s'enivre de ses dons dans *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, étalant une richesse d'idées et d'ornementations qu'il réduira plus tard à une relative simplicité dans la musique de Constanze. Dans une lettre à son père se rapportant à "How I loved him", Mozart explique qu'il "sacrifia légèrement l'aria de Constanze pour la gorge flexible de Mlle Cavalieri" – la soprano vedette de la compagnie, et très probablement la maîtresse de Salieri, le rival de Mozart. Mais l'aria "Tortures unrelenting" est encore plus ornée, et comporte des parties pour quatre instruments *obbligato* – flûte, hautbois, violon et violoncelle – à l'intérieur de son accompagnement orchestral. De proportion monumentale, la forme de l'aria est celle d'un premier mouvement de concerto débutant par l'exposition habituelle de ses thèmes à l'orchestre pendant laquelle le soliste – Constanze dans le cas présent – demeure silencieux. Cette vaste introduction dure plus de deux minutes pour une aria qui en totalise cinq en tout, et a toujours posé des difficultés aux metteurs en scène.

Malgré la critique de Joseph II (s'il l'a vraiment faite), *The Abduction from the*

Seraglio fut bien reçu, et onze autres représentations suivirent rien qu'en 1782. Entre 1783 et 1788, il fut donné trente fois dans les théâtres de la cour viennoise. Il connut également un grand succès en Allemagne, et rendit célèbre le nom de Mozart dans toute l'Europe centrale. Sa première représentation en Angleterre eut lieu à Covent Garden le 25 novembre 1827, dans une version chantée en anglais, avec un argument considérablement modifié et de nouveaux morceaux composés par Christian Kramer. L'œuvre fut traduite en italien en 1866 et représentée à Londres au Théâtre de Sa Majesté (Her Majesty's Theatre): c'est de cette version que provient le titre parfois rencontré de *Il seraglio*. La première de l'opéra en Italie à Florence eut lieu aussi tard que 1935. Sir Thomas Beecham remonta *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, de nouveau en anglais, au Théâtre de Sa Majesté (His Majesty's Theatre) en 1910, tandis que la British National Opera Company le chanta en anglais à Covent Garden au cours de la saison 1922–1923. Le Sadler's Wells Opera et son successeur l'English National Opera l'ont représenté régulièrement. La première production au Metropolitan Opera de New York date de 1946, et elle fut également chantée en anglais.

La version enregistrée ici provient d'une production donnée par le Phoenix Opera au Festival de Bath en 1967, et nous donne à entendre l'une des rares incursions de Yehudi Menuhin dans le domaine de l'opéra. Celles-ci eurent lieu en grande partie à Bath pendant la période où il était le directeur artistique de son festival. Il est notable que Menuhin – un artiste véritablement international, né en Amérique de parents juifs d'Ukraine, par la suite citoyen britannique, et l'un des premiers musiciens classiques d'Occident à prendre part à des concerts de musique indienne et de jazz – devait aborder la musique turque de Mozart avec un plaisir aussi évident.

Une fois l'enregistrement réalisé, la maison de disque décida de remplacer le Belmonte de la version originale du Phoenix Opera par le ténor suédois Nicolai Gedda, qui non seulement chante admirablement le rôle, mais également possède une diction anglaise exceptionnelle. Il est également bon de posséder sur disque la Constanze de la soprano colorature américaine Mattiwillda Dobbs: parmi d'autres moments importants de sa carrière figurent des rôles tels que Gilda, Oscar et Lucia (Donizetti) au Metropolitan Opera de New York. La basse néo-zélandaise Noel Mangin fut un célèbre Osmin – un rôle qu'il

incarna régulièrement au Sadler's Wells Opera – tandis que le rôle de Blonde nous donne un souvenir précieux de la soprano australienne Jenifer Eddy. L'année qui suivit cet enregistrement, elle fut atteinte d'une maladie qui devait malheureusement mettre un terme à sa carrière lyrique. Aujourd'hui, elle poursuit avec succès une importante activité d'imprésario musical. Le rôle de Pedrillo est interprété par John Fryatt. Membre de la D'Oyly Carte Opera Company dans les années 1950, il chanta par la suite des rôles de ténor et de baryton au Sadler's Wells Opera, puis à l'English national Opera.

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Traduction: Francis Marchal

Argument

L'action se situe dans le parc du palais du pacha Sélim, sur la côte méditerranéenne de la Turquie.

COMPACT DISC ONE

Acte I

1 – 3 Belmonte, un noble espagnol, est à la recherche de sa bien-aimée, Constanze, qui a été enlevée par des pirates. Il se trouve près d'un palais et se demande si c'est celui du

pacha Sélim. Il prie pour que l'amour le conduise vers Constanze. ^[4] – ^[5] Belmonte interroge Osmin, le gardien du sérail, qui l'ignore. Toutefois, lorsque Belmonte s'enquiert de Pedrillo, son ancien serviteur, Osmin répond avec emportement et, suspectant que Belmonte a des vues sur le harem du pacha, il le chasse.

^[6] – ^[7] Osmin marmonne et ressasse sa haine pour Pedrillo qui s'est insinué dans les bonnes grâces du pacha et est devenu jardinier au palais. Pedrillo arrive pour demander si le pacha, parti faire de la voile, est rentré.

^[8] Osmin quitte rageusement et Belmonte apparaît, surpris de trouver Pedrillo à cet endroit. Pedrillo raconte à Belmonte que le pacha l'a acheté aux pirates, avec Constanze et sa servante anglaise Blonde (dont Pedrillo est épris), et a donné Blonde à Osmin. Bien que Constanze soit devenue la favorite du pacha, elle a résisté à son amour. Belmonte dit qu'un bateau se tient près pour leur évasion. Pedrillo le prévient que ce sera difficile de déjouer la vigilance rusée et assidue d'Osmin. Pour pénétrer dans le palais, ils décident que Belmonte assumera le rôle d'un architecte distingué, en visite. ^[9] – ^[11] Belmonte exprime alors son émotion à l'idée de revoir Constanze.

^[12] Le pacha arrive et est salué par sa cour.

^[13] Il demande à Constanze pourquoi elle est si triste; il voudrait qu'elle l'aime, mais seulement si elle lui offre son amour en toute liberté.

^[14] Constanze réplique que c'est la séparation de son bien-aimé qui est la cause de sa profonde douleur. ^[15] Le pacha est courroucé, mais il avoue que sa résistance avive son désir.

^[16] Constanze quitte et Pedrillo présente Belmonte comme un architecte formé dans la tradition italienne. Le pacha accepte de le consulter. Osmin tente furieusement d'empêcher Pedrillo et Belmonte d'entrer au palais, mais finalement, ils passent outre.

Acte II

^[17] – ^[19] Blonde, outragée par les avances grossières d'Osmin, lui dit que c'est la tendresse et non la force qui éveille l'affection. Osmin lui ordonne de l'aimer car elle est son esclave, mais elle le repousse dédaigneusement et rétorque qu'elle aura recours à l'influence de Constanze sur le pacha pour châtier Osmin.

^[20] Ce dernier l'avertit de ne pas flirter avec Pedrillo, ^[21] – ^[23] et déclare que les Anglais sont fous d'accorder de telles libertés à leurs femmes. Blonde, toutefois, se délecte de son indépendance d'esprit.

^[24] – ^[25] Constanze, anéantie de douleur, songe à son bonheur passé.

COMPACT DISC TWO

^[1] Blonde tente de consoler Constanze en faisant miroiter l'espoir que Belmonte viendra les sauver. Lorsque le pacha menace Constanze de la torturer si elle refuse de l'aimer, Constanze répond qu'elle ne peut que le respecter. ^[2] Elle résiste avec provocation à ses menaces en disant que la mort est son seul espoir et l'infidélité, sa seule crainte. ^[3] Le pacha est déconcerté et ne sait que faire pour gagner son amour.

^[4] Pedrillo prévient Blonde de l'arrivée de Belmonte et de leur plan: les hommes placeront une échelle sous la fenêtre des dames à minuit. Auparavant, Pedrillo se sera chargé d'enivrer Osmin. ^[5] – ^[6] Blonde est ravie et va annoncer la nouvelle à Constanze. ^[7] Resté seul, Pedrillo rassemble ses forces pour le "combat" imminent. ^[8] – ^[9] Il persuade Osmin, quelque peu réticent, de goûter d'un certain vin, et les deux hommes font l'éloge de Bacchus et des femmes. ^[10] Lorsque le breuvage a exercé ses effets sur Osmin, Pedrillo l'envoie cuver son vin, ^[11] – ^[13] donnant ainsi une chance aux amants de se rencontrer.

^[14] La joie extatique de Belmonte et de Pedrillo tourne peu à peu au vinaigre, comme ils accusent les femmes d'infidélité.

^[15] Constanze est peinée et offensée, Blonde est furieuse. ^[16] Belmonte et Pedrillo demandent que leur jalousie leur soit pardonnée et tout se termine en une amoureuse réconciliation.

Acte III

^[17] Belmonte qui attend la mise en œuvre du plan de sauvetage réfléchit à l'amour, à sa puissance et à sa joie. ^[18] – ^[19] Pedrillo apparaît et, comme signal à l'adresse des deux femmes, il chante une sérénade "orientale" évoquant un jeune chevalier venu d'une contrée lointaine pour sauver une jeune fille, prisonnière des Maures. ^[20] Belmonte vient chercher Constanze et fuit à la hâte avec elle tandis que Pedrillo grimpe à l'échelle pour sauver Blonde. Mais Osmin a été averti et a appelé quelques gardiens. Pedrillo et Blonde sont arrêtés, Belmonte et Constanze aussi. ^[21] Osmin jubile à l'idée des tortures et de l'exécution qui les attendent.

^[22] Le pacha affronte Constanze. Elle admet sa culpabilité à ses yeux, mais dit avoir agi par loyauté à l'égard de son bien-aimé pour lequel elle est prête à sacrifier sa vie. Belmonte implore la compassion, expliquant qu'il est d'une famille noble espagnole du nom de Lostados qui s'acquittera pour le sauver d'une

rançon importante. Le pacha se rend compte que Belmonte est le fils de son plus grand ennemi, qui l'a expulsé de sa patrie. Il dit aux amants qu'il leur infligera la punition que le père de Belmonte aurait ordonnée et les laisse sous bonne garde. ^[23] – ^[24] Belmonte regrette d'avoir conduit Constanze à la mort, mais elle se reproche sa destruction à lui. Le couple affronte la mort comme l'unique état qui puisse les garder ensemble.

^[25] Le pacha réapparaît pour leur faire part de son jugement. Il dit à Belmonte d'emmener Constanze et de retourner chez lui: il méprise trop le père de Belmonte pour l'imiter et répondra à l'injustice par la clémence. Constanze demande à être pardonnée et Pedrillo implore la miséricorde pour Blonde et pour lui, au grand scandale d'Osmin. ^[27] Ils expriment tous les quatre leur gratitude au pacha pour sa magnanimité. Ceci est insupportable à Osmin qui décrit les tortures qu'il voudrait infliger aux étrangers.

^[28] – ^[29] À l'exception de ce dernier, tous concluent que rien n'est plus méprisable que la vengeance et, ensemble, ils font l'éloge du pacha.

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Traduction: Marie-Françoise de Meeûs

Nicolai Gedda est reconnu dans le monde entier comme l'un des plus grands artistes de notre temps, et il a été acclamé pour sa maîtrise d'un immense répertoire couvrant presque tous les styles et les périodes dans les domaines de l'opéra, de l'oratorio, du lied et du chant avec orchestre.

Né à Stockholm d'un père russe (chanteur basse) et d'une mère suédoise, Nicolai Gedda fit ses débuts professionnels à l'Opéra royal de Stockholm en 1952 dans *Le Postillon de Longjumeau*. Herbert von Karajan se trouvait dans la salle, et l'engagea immédiatement pour chanter dans son enregistrement de la Messe en si mineur de J.S. Bach. Ainsi, l'année 2002 marque cinquante ans d'enregistrement pour Nicolai Gedda. Il fit ses débuts à La Scala de Milan en 1953, à l'Opéra de Paris en 1954, et au Metropolitan Opera de New York (dans le rôle titre de *Faust* de Gounod) en 1957. Après ses débuts au Royal Opera de Covent Garden en 1965 (dans le rôle du Duc de Mantoue dans *Rigoletto* de Verdi), il revint y chanter Benvenuto Cellini, Alfredo, Gustavus III dans *Un ballo in maschera*, Nemorino et Lensky. Il créa des rôles importants dans *Vanessa* de Barber et dans *The Last Savage* de Menotti au Metropolitan Opera de New York.

Ses triomphes à l'opéra sont allés des œuvres

de Haydn et de Mozart à celles de Stravinsky, Orff, Barber et Menotti. En récital, il est considéré comme un interprète exceptionnel de lied. Il est également le ténor le plus enregistré au monde avec 200 disques à son actif. Parmi ceux-ci figurent des opéras complets tels que *Guillaume Tell*, *La Bohème*, *Faust*, *Werther*, *Manon*, *Così fan tutte* et *Benvenuto Cellini*.

Née à Atlanta en Géorgie (USA), **Mattiwilda Dobbs** commença ses études de chant à New York, et obtint également une maîtrise d'espagnol. Elle étudia en Californie avec Lotte Lehmann et à Paris avec Pierre Bernac. Après avoir fait ses débuts en 1952 dans le rôle titre de l'opéra de Stravinsky *Le Rossignol* au Festival des Pays-Bas, elle s'est produite dans les capitales de Scandinavie, en Belgique, en France, en Italie et en Angleterre. A Glyndebourne et au Royal Opera de Covent Garden, elle a interprété des rôles tels que Constanze, Zerbinetta, la Reine (*Le Coq d'or*), Gilda, Lucia, Olympia et l'Oiseau de la forêt (*Siegfried*). Elle a fait ses débuts au Metropolitan Opera de New York dans le rôle de Gilda, et y a chanté également ceux de Lucia, Olympia et Zerlina. Mattiwilda Dobbs s'est par ailleurs produite à La Scala de Milan,

à l'Opéra de Paris et dans les principaux festivals européens.

La chanteuse australienne **Jenifer Eddy** fit une impressionnante carrière de soprano colorature avant son arrivée en Angleterre, chantant régulièrement en soliste pour la chaîne ABC à travers toute l'Australie, et se produisant lors de la saison 1956–1957 dans les rôles de Susanna, Papagena et Despina à l'Australian Opera.

Elle fit ses débuts au Royal Opera de Covent Garden en 1959, et y chanta chaque saison jusqu'en 1969. Elle se fit également entendre à l'English National Opera, au Scottish Opera, au Welsh National Opera, ainsi que dans la plupart des grands festivals de Grande-Bretagne, en Allemagne, en France et en Italie. Parmi ses rôles, on citera Rosina, Norina, Musetta, Olympia, Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), Tytania (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Fiakermilli, Zerbinetta, Despina et Blondchen. Chantant fréquemment à la radio de la BBC et en concert, elle se produisit également à la BBC Television, plus particulièrement dans le rôle d'Adele dans la production de Glen Byam Shaw de *Die Fledermaus*, et dans des extraits de *Don Giovanni* avec Tito Gobbi et

Sir Geraint Evans. En 1969, elle chanta le rôle de Blondchen au Maggio Musicale de Florence sous la direction de Zubin Mehta, mais la maladie l'obligea ensuite à abandonner sa carrière.

Jenifer Eddy retourna en Australie en 1975, et faisant œuvre de pionnier dans le domaine du management d'artistes, elle fonda la compagnie Jenifer Eddy Artists' Management dont elle est toujours le Managing Director. En 1997, elle a été décorée de l'Ordre de l'Australie pour services rendus à la musique.

Né et éduqué à York, **John Fryatt** a étudié le chant avec Frank Titterton et Joseph Hislop. Il a été membre du D'Oyly Carte Opera et du Sadler's Wells/English National Opera, et a été régulièrement invité à se produire à Glyndebourne et au Royal Opera de Covent Garden à Londres. Son répertoire compte des rôles tels que Altoum (*Turandot*) et Goro (*Madam Butterfly*) à l'English National Opera; Don Basilio (*Le nozze di Figaro*) à l'Opera Northern Ireland, et Monsieur Triquet (*Eugène Onéguine*) au Festival de Glyndebourne. A l'étranger, John Fryatt a chanté à Wexford, Hambourg, Bordeaux, Rouen, Palerme, Bruxelles, Lyon, Chicago, Paris, Nice, Genève,

Lille, Amsterdam, Santa Fe, Vancouver, New York et Monte Carlo.

La discographie de John Fryatt inclut le rôle de Horace Adams (*Peter Grimes*) sous la direction de Richard Hickox pour Chandos. Il figure également dans de nombreuses productions télévisées, et dans les enregistrements vidéo de *Orphée aux Enfers* et de *Cox and Box*.

Noel Mangin naquit à Wellington en Nouvelle-Zélande, et chanta son premier solo comme garçon soprano à l'âge de huit ans. Il fit ses débuts de ténor à l'âge de vingt-et-un ans après avoir étudié avec Ernest Drake. Il chanta des rôles de ténor pendant trois ans, puis sa voix changeant de registre, il reparut dix-huit mois plus tard comme basse-baryton, chantant Germont le père (*La traviata*) et Marcello (*La bohème*). L'année suivante, sa voix se fixa dans le registre de basse, et il chanta le rôle de Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*). Il vint à Paris étudier avec Dominique Modesti, et à Londres avec Joseph Hislop. De 1963 à 1967, il chanta au Sadler's Wells Opera. Il se produisit également au Staatoper de Hambourg et au Victoria State Opera. A partir de 1979, il chanta régulièrement les rôles de Fafner, Hunding et Hagen dans les

productions du *Ring* données à l'Opéra de Seattle.

Les rôles les plus notables de Noel Mangin furent Don Pasquale, Ochs et Osmin. Il fut décoré de l'Ordre de l'Empire britannique (OBE) en 1981. Noel Mangin est mort en 1995.

David Kelsey fut non seulement un acteur célèbre, mais également un pianiste, un baryton et un auteur de chansons et de sketches. Il tint le rôle du pacha Selim Bassa dans les représentations données par le Phoenix Opera lors du Festival de Bath en 1967. Il s'est produit au Lyric Theatre et en revue au Comedy Theatre de Londres. David Kelsey a participé également à plusieurs productions au Festival de Chletenham, et a effectué des tournées dans le monde entier, notamment en Europe, en Australie (où il s'est produit à la télévision), en Nouvelle-Zélande et en Extrême-Orient.

Né à New York en 1916, **Yehudi Menuhin** commença l'étude du violon à l'âge de cinq ans à San Francisco. Ses progrès furent si rapides qu'il put se produire professionnellement à San Francisco dès 1924 à l'âge de sept ans, et donner un récital

complet l'année suivante. Il fit ses débuts à New York en 1927, et ses débuts en concerto avec la *Symphonie espagnole* de Lalo la même année. Après avoir réalisé son premier enregistrement en 1928, il devint l'un des artistes les plus enregistrés du vingtième siècle. Sa famille vint s'établir à Paris dans les années 1930, mais après son premier mariage, Menuhin choisit la Californie pour sa résidence principale. Au cours de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, il donna des concerts pour les troupes Américaines et celles des forces Alliées. En 1944, il fut le premier artiste à se produire à l'Opéra de Paris après la Libération.

En 1947, Yehudi Menuhin fut le premier artiste juif à se produire avec l'Orchestre de la Philharmonie de Berlin sous la direction de Furtwängler, et il réalisa plusieurs enregistrements avec ce dernier. Après son second mariage, Yehudi Menuhin et sa famille quittèrent les Etats-Unis, et choisirent Londres et Gstaad en Suisse comme lieux de résidence. Avec le Dallas Symphony Orchestra, il commença en 1947 une seconde carrière, celle de chef d'orchestre, et en Angleterre, il dirigea les festivals de Bath et de Windsor, ainsi qu'un festival annuel à Gstaad. En 1959, le Bath Festival Orchestra fut fondé (par la suite rebaptisé Menuhin Festival Orchestra), et

Menuhin enregistra plus de 100 disques avec cette formation.

Parmi les nombreuses autres activités de Yehudi Menuhin, on citera la fondation de la Yehudi Menuhin School dans le Surrey en Angleterre, Live Music Now! (une organisation qui envoie de jeunes musiciens professionnels jouer dans des salles et des communautés où les concerts publics sont rares), l'International Menuhin Academy de Gstaad, et le Concours

de violon Yehudi Menuhin. Il fut créé Chevalier de l'Ordre de l'Empire britannique (KBE) à titre honorifique en 1966, et reçut la Médaille d'or de la Royal Philharmonic Society en 1972. Après avoir adopté la nationalité britannique en 1985, il fut anobli en 1987, et reçut la médaille de l'Ordre du Mérite en 1987. En 1993, il fut créé pair d'Angleterre à vie. Yehudi Menuhin est mort en Allemagne en 1999 au cours d'une tournée avec orchestre.



EMI Records

Nicolai Gedda

Mozart: The Abduction from the Seraglio

Le origini dell'opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) o *Il ratto dal serraglio* di Mozart risalgono al desiderio dell'imperatore Giuseppe II Asburgo di offrire ai suoi sudditi viennesi regolari stagioni operistiche nella loro lingua, il tedesco.

Oltre ad essere molto musicale, l'imperatore Giuseppe (1741–1790) era convinto che il teatro fosse un mezzo per formare l'opinione pubblica; era inevitabile, quindi, che si adoperasse per influenzare la vita operistica nella capitale imperiale. Dopo aver assunto il titolo di Imperatore alla morte del padre, Francesco I, nel 1765, Giuseppe era stato coreggente con la madre fino alla morte di lei, avvenuta nel 1780. Alcuni anni prima, però, Maria Teresa aveva lasciato al figlio la direzione dei due teatri di corte viennesi. Giuseppe pensò subito di riformarli: il Burgtheater divenne così il Teatro Nazionale Tedesco, mentre il Kärntnertheater fu messo a disposizione delle compagnie non sovvenzionate. L'Imperatore curò principalmente del primo, dove un gruppo attori e un altro di cantanti si esibivano nella lingua del pubblico.

Organizzare una compagnia di attori si rivelò un'impresa relativamente facile, ma fu necessario più tempo per formare una troupe operistica di cantanti di lingua tedesca degni di un pubblico abituato al meglio. L'altro problema fu il repertorio. In altri centri di lingua tedesca esisteva, è vero, una tradizione limitata che aveva dato vita ad opere in lingua locale, ma era praticamente inesistente a Vienna, dove fino a quel momento avevano tenuto banco le compagnie italiane o francesi. Le alternative erano tre: adattare ai gusti locali opere tedesche prodotte altrove, tradurre le opere più famose di Gluck, Grétry, Paisiello e altri dal francese o dall'italiano, e commissionare nuovi lavori. L'impresa iniziò il 17 febbraio 1778 proprio con un'opera di questo genere: *Die Bergknappen* (*I minatori*), *Singspiel* in un atto di Ignaz Umlauf.

Mozart era indubbiamente a conoscenza di questo importante progresso artistico, anche se non viveva ancora a Vienna. Anzi, aveva trascorso tutto il 1778 in Germania o in Francia in cerca di un posto permanente ben remunerato, ma senza molta fortuna. Dopo un'assenza di sedici mesi, il compositore

ritornò a Salisburgo per prendere il posto di organista di corte presso il suo detestato ex protettore, l'arcivescovo Colloredo.

Per ironia della sorte, fu proprio attraverso Colloredo che Mozart fece ritorno a Vienna per la prima volta dopo tredici anni e decise poi di stabilirsi qui. L'arcivescovo si era recato nella capitale asburgica per una lunga visita nel 1781, in occasione dell'insediamento sul trono di Giuseppe, e aveva richiesto la presenza di Mozart per fare sfoggio del proprio seguito musicale. Memore dei recenti festeggiamenti a Monaco dopo il successo della prima dell'*Idomeneo*, Mozart avrebbe considerato insulti premeditati tutte le arroganti iniziative dell'arcivescovo durante questa visita a Vienna; in giugno si fece praticamente licenziare.

Si trattava di una svolta decisiva nella vita del compositore. Avendo intuito che era possibile guadagnare bene nella capitale imperiale ed essendosi innamorato di Konstanze Weber, Mozart tagliò i ponti con Salisburgo e con l'arcivescovo per scegliere il matrimonio e un'esistenza indipendente. Il nuovo interesse manifestato dall'imperatore per l'opera in tedesco fu indubbiamente un fattore determinante nella sua decisione.

Dopo aver comunicato la propria decisione al padre Leopoldo, a Salisburgo (con

prevedibile costernazione di quest'ultimo), Mozart cercò di farsi un nome. Una delle figure influenti della gerarchia operistica viennese era l'attore e commediografo Johann Gottlieb Stephanie, detto Stephanie junior, che era stato da poco nominato direttore del Singspiel nazionale tedesco. Nonostante la sua fama di disonestà, Mozart scrisse a Leopoldo (1 agosto 1781) che si era dimostrato un buon amico e gli aveva consegnato un libretto da musicare. "Il testo è buono. L'argomento è di ispirazione turca e si intitola *Bellmont e Konstanze, o seduzione dal Serraglio...*"

Nonostante l'errore di Mozart si tratta della stessa opera. Come per molti altri libretti di Stephanie, si basa su un testo altrui; in questo caso di Christoph Friedrich Bretzner, musicato in precedenza da Johann André e presentato per la prima volta a Berlino il 25 maggio 1781. Stephanie e Mozart speravano di far colpo con la loro versione in occasione della visita del granduca russo Paul Petrovic con la moglie, prevista per la metà di settembre. La visita fu però rimandata e l'Imperatore invece decise in seguito di proporre al granduca la musica di Gluck. L'opera di Mozart fu rimandata all'estate del 1782, indubbiamente con grande frustrazione del compositore, ma gli diede anche la possibilità di insistere perché

venissero apportate delle modifiche sostanziali al libretto che gli consentissero di creare una partitura più ambiziosa.

Il genere di argomento “turco”, come lo definiva Mozart, non era nuovo, naturalmente. Due degli opéra comique francesi di Gluck, *Le Cadi dupé* (1761) e *La Rencontre imprévue* (1763), entrambi presentati per la prima volta al Burgtheater di Vienna venivano ancora ricordati e anzi il secondo, tradotto in tedesco, era stato riproposto recentemente con grande successo. Mozart sapeva bene che al pubblico del posto piaceva particolarmente lo stile alla turca utilizzato in queste partiture, perché derivava dalla musica eseguita dalle bande di giannizzeri che accompagnavano gli eserciti turchi in battaglia, con tamburi e piatti in prima fila. In versione semplificata e occidentalizzata, fu associata nei contesti teatrali ai temi turchi o addirittura all’Oriente in generale.

Al di là del richiamo puramente musicale, tuttavia, l’ambientamento dell’opera rispecchiava un interesse crescente per le differenze culturali ispirato dai crescenti contatti tra Oriente e Occidente. Brigid Brophy ha osservato: “I missionari partivano per convertire i pagani al cristianesimo, gli esperti militari per sottomettere e sfruttare gli indigeni. Ma dalle informazioni che essi inviarono in Europa il

messaggio recepito dal pensiero illuminato fu che i pagani e gli indigeni potevano essere più retti e più civili del regno cristiano.” Lo stesso Mozart aveva già analizzato tali possibilità in un *Singspiel* incompiuto, *Zaide* (1779–80), che Stephanie aveva respinto perché troppo serio per il Burgtheater. Per quanto il ritratto dei turchi del *Seraglio* non sia del tutto positivo, contiene comunque degli elementi positivi, soprattutto nel gesto di clemenza finale dell’opera. Per molti versi, il testo in generale propone il messaggio illuminato che Giuseppe desiderava promuovere.

Oltre al coro, due personaggi del *Seraglio* sono turchi. Il primo è il sovrano locale, il pascià Selim, che non ha un ruolo cantato, come anche nell’originale di Bretzner e André. Il secondo è il suo servo Osmino, vivace creazione musicale e personaggio al tempo stesso comico e minaccioso. Mozart compose il ruolo per il basso Ludwig Fischer, star della compagnia e molto amato dal pubblico. Osmino presenta un’immagine negativa del turco, che rifiuta i diritti delle donne e non fa altro che minacciare torture. Persino Selim minaccia Costanza quando respinge il suo amore, anche se è difficile non considerare il suo improvviso accesso d’ira come un espediente per dare il via alla più grande e fiera

aria di Costanza “Tortures unrelenting”, un’aggiunta di Stephanie e Mozart al testo originale. Eppure il suo rifiuto di vendicarsi del figlio dello spagnolo che l’aveva offeso così gravemente e il suo gesto di consentire il ritorno di Costanza e della sua ancella Bionda in Europa con i rispettivi compagni innalza la scena conclusiva con una morale toccante e illuminata.

Osmino, invece, si precipita fuori scena alla fine in un accesso ossessivo di desiderio di tortura e pena di morte – quest’ultima sarebbe stata abolita da Giuseppe appena cinque anni dopo. Prima, viene sconfitto e respinto di Bionda, una donna inglese e pertanto rappresentante della nazione più progressista in assoluto secondo l’Illuminismo. (Costanza, Belmonte e Pedrillo sono tutti spagnoli; un’altra aggiunta al mix culturale è la serenata di Pedrillo, “In Moorish lands” naturalmente con tratti moreschi nella melodia.) Il commentatore Edward Said ha sottolineato che le descrizioni dell’Oriente spesso descrivono l’Occidente camuffato, ed è evidente che l’atteggiamento reazionario qui associato con i Turchi esisteva molto più vicino alla capitale di Giuseppe ed era esattamente questo che l’imperatore era ansioso di cambiare.

La prima del *Seraglio* si svolse presso il Burgtheater il 16 luglio 1782. Il più famoso commento di quell’occasione forse è apocrifo. Il primo biografo di Mozart, (1798), Franz Xaver Niemetschek, parla di uno scambio di battute tra l’imperatore e il compositore. “Troppo bello per le nostre orecchie, mio caro Mozart, e tante note!” avrebbe detto Giuseppe. Mozart avrebbe replicato: “Nemmeno una più del necessario, Maestà”. Ma c’è qualcosa nell’osservazione. Come nel precedente *Idomeneo*, nel *Seraglio* Mozart si diletta nelle sue capacità, facendo sfoggio di una ricchezza di idee e abbellimenti che alla fine avrebbe ridotto alla relativa semplicità della *Clemenza di Tito* e del *Magic Flute*. E questo è evidente soprattutto nella musica di Costanza. In una lettera al padre, lo stesso Mozart spiega di aver sacrificato un po’ una delle arie di Costanza “alla voce flessibile di Mademoiselle Cavalieri”, star della compagnia, soprano e quasi certamente amante del rivale Salieri. “Tortures unrelenting” è ancora più complessa e include parti per ben quattro strumenti solisti – flauto, oboe, violino e violoncello – nell’accompagnamento orchestrale. Concepita su scala grandiosa, la forma dell’aria è quella del primo movimento completo di un concerto, e inizia con la normale esposizione orchestrale del tema,

durante la quale la cantante, Costanza, rimane in silenzio. Questa vasta introduzione dura più di due minuti e l'aria prosegue per dieci minuti ed è da sempre un incubo per i registi teatrali.

Nonostante l'appunto di Giuseppe II (sempre che sia stato effettivamente pronunciato), il *Seraglio* ebbe buona accoglienza e fu rappresentato altre undici volte solo nel 1782. Tra il 1783 e il 1788 ebbe altre trenta rappresentazioni nei teatri di corte di Vienna. Altrettanto successo riscosse in Germania e fu l'opera che diede fama al nome di Mozart nell'Europa centrale. La sua prima in Gran Bretagna fu al Covent Garden il 25 novembre 1827, e allora l'opera fu eseguita in inglese, ma con una trama notevolmente modificata e l'inclusione di nuovi brani musicali di Christian Kramer. Nel 1866 venne tradotta in italiano ed eseguita presso Her Majesty's Theatre: da questa versione deriva il titolo che si incontra talvolta, *Il ratto dal serraglio*. La prima rappresentazione in Italia avvenne in realtà nel 1935 a Firenze. Sir Thomas Beecham la ripropose, in inglese, presso His Majesty's Theatre nel 1910, mentre la British National Opera Company la eseguì al Covent Garden in inglese durante la stagione 1922–23. La Sadler's Wells Opera e la

English National Opera, sua successiva incarnazione, l'hanno rappresentata regolarmente. Il primo allestimento al Metropolitan di New York nel 1946 fu nella lingua del pubblico.

L'esecuzione presentata nella registrazione, invece, risale a un allestimento della Phoenix Opera presentato al festival di Bath nel 1967. Si tratta di una delle rare escursioni di Yehudi Menuhin nel campo dell'opera, concentrate proprio in questa città nel periodo in cui il musicista era direttore del suo festival. Menuhin, vero internazionalista musicale, nato in America da genitori ebrei ucraini, successivamente divenuto cittadino britannico e uno dei primi musicisti classici occidentali a partecipare ad esecuzioni di musica indiana e jazz, affronta la musica "turca" della partitura mozartiana con evidente piacere.

All'epoca della registrazione, la società discografica decise di sostituire il Belmonte originale della Phoenix Opera con il tenore svedese Nicolai Gedda, un interprete superbo, dall'ottima dizione inglese. Un altro elemento valido, in forma permanente, è la Costanza del soprano americano di coloritura Mattiwilda Dobbs: altri momenti salienti della sua carriera hanno compreso i ruoli di Gilda, Oscar e Lucia di Lammermoor al Metropolitan. Il

basso Noel Mangin nato in Nuova Zelanda fu un famoso Osmino, un ruolo che interpretò regolarmente per la Sadler's Wells Opera – mentre il ruolo di Bionda ci propone un significativo ricordo del soprano australiano Jenifer Eddy. L'anno dopo la registrazione la cantante fu colpita da una malattia che pose fine alla sua carriera; oggi è un'agente di successo. Pedrillo, John Fryatt, apparteneva alla compagnia lirica D'Oyly Carte negli anni Cinquanta e in seguito è apparso in ruoli per tenore e baritono con la Sadler's Wells Opera e poi con la English National Opera.

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Trama

L'opera è ambientata nel parco del palazzo del Pascià Selim, sulla costa mediterranea della Turchia.

COMPACT DISC ONE

Atto I

[1] – [2] Belmonte, nobile spagnolo, va in cerca dell'amata Costanza, rapita dai pirati. Fermo davanti a un palazzo, si chiede se sia quello del Pascià Selim e invoca amore perché lo guidi fino a Costanza. [4] – [5] Rivolge

alcune domande a Osmino, custode dell'harem del pascià, ma viene ignorato. Quando però chiede notizie di Pedrillo, suo servitore, Osmino reagisce con ira e, sospettando che Belmonte abbia delle mire sull'harem del pascià, lo caccia via.

[6] – [7] Osmino rivela di odiare Pedrillo, che si è ingraziato il pascià ed è entrato a suo servizio come giardiniere. Arriva Pedrillo per chiedere se il pascià abbia fatto ritorno con la sua nave. [8] Osmino si allontana furibondo e Belmonte esce allo scoperto, sorpreso di vedere qui il suo servitore. Pedrillo racconta di essere stato venduto al pascià dai pirati insieme a Costanza e alla sua ancella inglese Bionda (di cui Pedrillo è innamorato). Il pascià ha concesso Bionda ad Osmino; Costanza è divenuta la favorita dell'harem, ma continua a respingere tutte le profferte del pascià. Belmonte dichiara di avere una nave pronta per la fuga. Pedrillo lo avverte che sarà difficile ingannare l'astuto Osmino, sempre all'erta. Entrambi decidono che, per entrare nel palazzo, Belmonte assumerà il ruolo di un illustre architetto in visita. [9] – [11] Quindi Belmonte manifesta la propria emozione all'idea di rivedere Costanza.

[12] – [13] Arriva il pascià, salutato dai suoi servi, e chiede a Costanza il perché della sua

grande tristezza; desidera il suo amore, ma solo se la donna è disposta a concederlo spontaneamente. ^[14] Costanza risponde che la causa del suo profondo dolore è la lontananza dal suo innamorato; ^[15] il pascià si infuria, ma confessa che la resistenza della donna acuisce il suo desiderio.

^[16] Costanza esce e Pedrillo presenta Belmonte, dichiarando che si tratta di un architetto italiano. Il pascià accetta una consulenza. Osmino, irosamente, cerca di impedire a Pedrillo e Belmonte di entrare nel palazzo, ma i due alla fine riescono ad aggirarlo.

Atto II

^[17] – ^[19] Disgustata dalle rozze avance di Osmino, Bionda gli dichiara che l'affetto si conquista con la tenerezza, non con la forza. Osmino le ordina di amarlo in quanto sua schiava, ma la donna lo respinge sdegnosamente e ribatte che sfrutterà l'ascendente di Costanza sul pascià per farlo punire. ^[20] Osmino le proibisce di flirtare con Pedrillo, ^[21] – ^[23] e dichiara che gli inglesi sono pazzi a concedere tanta libertà alle loro donne. Bionda, invece, è fiera del proprio spirito indipendente.

^[24] – ^[25] Costanza, oppressa dalla tristezza, ricorda la sua passata felicità.

COMPACT DISC TWO

^[1] Bionda cerca di consolarla esprimendo la speranza che Belmonte verrà a salvarle. Quando il pascià minaccia di torturare Costanza se non l'ama, la donna risponde che può concedergli solo del rispetto. ^[2] Resiste sdegnosamente alle minacce: non le resta che desiderare la morte e l'infedeltà è l'unica cosa che la spaventa. ^[3] Il pascià, sbigottito, si chiede come fare a conquistarla.

^[4] Pedrillo comunica a Bionda che è arrivato Belmonte e rivela il loro piano: a mezzanotte, i due uomini porteranno una scala alla finestra delle donne, dopo che Pedrillo avrà drogato Osmino. ^[5] – ^[6] Bionda, felice, va a riferirlo a Costanza. ^[7] Da solo, Pedrillo fa appello al proprio coraggio in vista della "battaglia" imminente. ^[8] – ^[9] Convince il riottoso Osmino a provare del vino e i due uomini esaltano Bacco e le donne. ^[10] Osmino finisce per alzare il gomito e Pedrillo lo manda a dormire. ^[11] – ^[13] Finalmente gli innamorati hanno la possibilità di incontrarsi. ^[14] La gioia iniziale gradualmente si trasforma in un litigio quando Belmonte e Pedrillo accusano le donne di infedeltà; ^[15] Costanza è ferita e offesa, ma Bionda va su tutte le furie. ^[16] Belmonte e Pedrillo chiedono perdono

e la scena si conclude con un'amorosa riconciliazione.

Atto III

^[17] In attesa di mettere in pratica il suo piano di salvataggio, Belmonte riflette sul potere e la gioia dell'amore. ^[18] – ^[19] Arriva Pedrillo per dare alle donne il segnale prestabilito, cantando una serenata "orientale" che parla di un cavaliere giunto da lontano per salvare una fanciulla prigioniera nella terra dei Mori. ^[20] Belmonte va a prendere Costanza e i due fuggono mentre Pedrillo sale per salvare Bionda. Ma Osmino è stato avvisato e ha chiamato le guardie. Entrambe le coppie vengono catturate. ^[21] Osmino esulta, pregustando la prospettiva della loro tortura ed esecuzione.

^[22] Il pascià affronta Costanza, che ammette la propria colpevolezza: ha agito per fedeltà al suo innamorato ed è disposta a morire per lui. Belmonte chiede clemenza, spiegando che discende dalla nobile famiglia spagnola dei Lostados, che pagherà un sostanzioso riscatto per lui. Il pascià si rende conto che Belmonte è figlio del suo più grande nemico, che l'ha allontanato dalla sua patria e dichiara agli innamorati che subiranno la stessa punizione che avrebbe ordinato il padre di

Belmonte, quindi li lascia sotto sorveglianza. ^[23] – ^[25] Belmonte si accusa di aver portato Costanza a morte, ma la donna si rimprovera della rovina di lui; entrambi attendono la morte, unica via per rimanere insieme.

^[26] Il pascià ritorna e pronuncia la sua sentenza: Belmonte deve tornare in patria con Costanza. Selim disprezza troppo il padre di Belmonte per imitarlo e intende ripagare l'ingiustizia con la clemenza. Costanza chiede perdono e Pedrillo supplica grazia per se stesso e Bionda, con grande sdegno di Osmino.

^[27] Le due coppie esprimono la loro gratitudine per la benevolenza del pascià. È davvero troppo per Osmino, il quale invece descrive le torture che gli piacerebbe infliggere agli stranieri.

^[28] – ^[29] Tutti traggono la conclusione che nulla è odioso quanto la vendetta e si aggiungono al coro di lodi del pascià.

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Traduzione: Emanuela Guastella

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, dell'oratorio, dell'operetta, del *lied* e delle composizioni per orchestra.

Nato a Stoccolma da padre russo e madre svedese, ha esordito come professionista alla Royal Opera di Stoccolma nel 1952 con *Le Postillon de Longjumeau*. Tra il pubblico si trovava Herbert von Karajan, che lo ingaggiò immediatamente per la registrazione della Messa in si minore di Bach. Nel 1953 Nicolai Gedda 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). Ha esordito con la Royal Opera nel 1965 (con il duca di Mantova nel *Rigoletto* di Verdi) e 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*. Inoltre è uno dei tenori con la discografia più ricca del mondo. Il 2002 segna il cinquantésimo anniversario della sua prima registrazione e oggi l'artista ha al suo attivo 200 titoli discografici, comprendenti versioni integrali delle opere *Guillaume Tell*, *La Bohème*, *Faust*, *Werther*, *Manon*, *Così fan tutte* e *Benvenuto Cellini*.

Nata ad Atlanta, in Georgia, **Mattiwilda Dobbs** iniziava a studiare canto a New York e conseguiva una laurea in spagnolo. Ha studiato con Lotte Lehmann in California e Pierre Bernac a Parigi; l'esordio risale al 1952 nel ruolo di protagonista in titre di *Le Rossignol* di Stravinskij in occasione dell'Holland Festival. Seguivano apparizioni nelle capitali scandinave, in Belgio, Francia, Italia e Inghilterra. Le interpretazioni a Glyndebourne e alla Royal Opera comprendono Constanze, Zerbinetta, la Regina (*Le Coq d'or*), Gilda, Lucia, Olympia e l'uccellino (*Siegfried*). L'esordio alla Metropolitan Opera di New York è stato nel ruolo di Gilda, e in seguito ha interpretato Lucia, Olympia e Zerlina. Ha cantato anche alla Scala, all'Opéra di Parigi e ai principali festival europei.

L'australiana **Jenifer Eddy** aveva già una notevole carriera come soprano di coloratura per le sue regolari apparizioni per l'ABC in tutta l'Australia e nella stagione 1956/57 dell'Australian Opera nei ruoli di Susanna, Papagena e Despina, prima della sua partenza per l'Inghilterra.

Esordiva alla Royal Opera House, Covent Garden nel 1959, dove avrebbe fatto ritorno

per tutte le stagioni fino al 1969, oltre a lavorare con la English National Opera, Scottish Opera, Welsh National Opera e a intervenire a moltissimi dei principali festival in Gran Bretagna, Germania, Francia e Italia. I suoi ruoli hanno incluso Rosina, Norina, Musetta, Olympia, Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), Tytania (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Fiakermilli, Zerbinetta, Despina e Blondchen. Frequenti anche le trasmissioni e i concerti per la BBC; la cantante è comparsa anche in televisione per la BBC, soprattutto nel ruolo di Adele nell'allestimento di Glen Byam Shaw dell'opera *Die Fledermaus* e in alcuni brani dal *Don Giovanni* con Tito Gobbi e sir Geraint Evans. Nel 1969 ha cantato il ruolo di Blondchen al Maggio Musicale con Zubin Mehta, prima che una malattia l'obbligasse ad abbandonare la carriera.

Di ritorno in Australia nel 1975, la cantante sarebbe diventata una delle prime agenti per artisti in quel Paese, creando nello stesso anno la società Jenifer Eddy Artists' Management di cui è ancora Managing Director. Nel 1997 ha ricevuto una medaglia dell'Order of Australia per il suo contributo alla musica.

John Fryatt, nato a York, ha studiato canto con Frank Titterton e Joseph Hislop. Ha fatto

parte delle compagnie D'Oyly Carte e Sadler's Wells/English National Opera ed è stato regolarmente ospite a Glyndebourne e alla Royal Opera, Covent Garden. Il suo repertorio comprende Altoom (*Turandot*) e Goro (*Madam Butterfly*) per English National Opera; Don Basilio (*Le nozze di Figaro*) per Opera Northern Ireland; Monsieur Triquet (*Eugenio Onieghin*) per la Glyndebourne Festival Opera. All'estero si è esibito a Wexford, Amburgo, Bordeaux, Rouen, Palermo, Bruxelles, Lionne, Chicago, Parigi, Nizza, Ginevra, Lille, Amsterdam, Santa Fe, Vancouver, New York e Monte Carlo.

La discografia comprende il ruolo del Rev. Horace Adams (*Peter Grimes*) con Richard Hickox per Chandos. John Fryatt è comparso in numerosi spettacoli televisivi e videoregistrazioni di *Orphée aux Enfers* e *Cox and Box*.

Noel Mangin nasceva a Wellington, in Nuova Zelanda e già a otto anni compariva in pubblico come voce bianca solista. Esordiva come tenore all'età di ventuno anni dopo aver studiato con Ernest Drake. Per tre anni avrebbe continuato a cantare ruoli da tenore, ma poi la sua voce subiva un cambiamento;

diciotto mesi dopo interpretava due ruoli per baritono basso, Germont padre (*La traviata*) e Marcello (*La bohème*). L'anno successivo la sua voce si era stabilizzata nel registro di basso e il cantante interpretava il ruolo di Sarastro (*Il flauto magico*). Ha studiato a Parigi con Dominique Modesti e a Londra con Joseph Hislop; nel periodo 1963–67 si è esibito con la Sadler's Wells Opera, oltre a comparire spesso all'Opera di Amburgo e alla Victoria State Opera. Dal 1979 in poi avrebbe interpretato regolarmente i ruoli di Fafner, Hunding e Hagen negli allestimenti del *Ring* dell'Opera di Seattle.

I ruoli più memorabili di Noel Mangin sono stati quelli di Don Pasquale, Ochs e Osmin. Nel 1981 veniva insignito della carica onoraria di OBE. È morto nel 1995.

David Kelsey, pianista, baritono e autore di liriche e sketch teatrali, oltre ad essere un noto attore, ha interpretato il ruolo del pascià Selim negli spettacoli della Phoenix Opera al Festival di Bath del 1967. È comparso al Lyric Theatre e ha partecipato a spettacoli di rivista al Comedy Theatre di Londra. Ha partecipato inoltre a diversi spettacoli del Festival di Cheltenham e ha svolto tournée in tutto il mondo, in Europa, Australia (dove è comparso

anche in televisione), Nuova Zelanda ed Estremo Oriente.

Yehudi Menuhin, nato a New York nel 1916, iniziava a studiare violino a San Francisco all'età di cinque anni. Il suo progresso fu talmente rapido che la prima apparizione da professionista a San Francisco risale al 1924, all'età di sette anni, seguita da un recital completo l'anno successivo. Due anni dopo, l'esordio a New York e quello in concerto, con l'interpretazione della *Symphonie espagnole* di Lalo. Nel 1928 effettuava la prima registrazione, che lo avrebbe portato a diventare uno degli artisti più registrati del secolo scorso. Negli anni '30 la sua famiglia si trasferiva a Parigi, ma dopo il primo matrimonio la sua dimora principale divenne la California. Durante la seconda Guerra mondiale, Menuhin si esibì per le truppe americane e alleate e nel 1944 fu il primo artista a comparire all'Opéra di Parigi dopo la liberazione.

Nel 1947 Yehudi Menuhin era il primo artista ebreo a comparire con i Berliner Philharmoniker diretti da Furtwängler, con cui avrebbe effettuato una serie di registrazioni con lui. Dopo il secondo matrimonio, il violinista e la sua famiglia lasciarono gli Stati

Uniti per trasferirsi a Londra e Gstaad, in Svizzera. Nel 1947, con l'Orchestra sinfonica di Dallas, iniziava la seconda carriera, quella di direttore d'orchestra. In Inghilterra dirigeva i festival di Bath e Windsor, oltre a un festival annuale a Gstaad. Nel 1959 si costituiva la Bath Festival Orchestra (in seguito avrebbe preso il nome di Menuhin Festival Orchestra); con questo gruppo Menuhin avrebbe effettuato oltre 100 registrazioni.

Tra le numerosissime iniziative di fondazione di Yehudi Menuhin vanno ricordate la Yehudi Menuhin School nel Surrey, Live Music Now! (un'organizzazione

che promuove esibizioni di giovani musicisti professionisti in locali o comunità in cui i concerti pubblici sono rari), la International Menuhin Academy a Gstaad e il concorso per violinisti intitolato al suo nome. L'artista ha ricevuto la medaglia d'oro della Royal Philharmonic Society nel 1972 e il titolo onorario di KBE nel 1966. Divenuto cittadino britannico nel 1985 veniva insignito del titolo di cavaliere, nel 1987 riceveva l'Order of Merit e nel 1993 veniva nominato pari a vita. Yehudi Menuhin è morto nel 1999 durante una tournée con l'orchestra in Germania.



Thea King (basset horn) and Archie Camden (bassoon) in the woodwind section of the Bath Festival Orchestra

David Farrell



Noel Mangin

David Farrell

To make it easy to skip large sections of dialogue, all dialogue is shown in grey shaded boxes.

COMPACT DISC ONE

Act I

The courtyard of the Pasha Selim's palace near the coast of Turkey: at the back, the main gates. On one side the palace and the harem, and on the other, Osmin's quarters and the gardens. The scene is the same in all three acts.

1 Overture

No. 1: Aria

Belmonte (*enters the courtyard through the main gates.*)

2 Here surely I must find her.
Constanza, my beloved.

O heaven, hear my pleading,
bring comfort to my heart,
my aching heart.

Bereft of her I suffer such anguish,
such endless pain.

O now with joy reward me.

O heaven, guide me to her again, *etc.*
(*scanning the palace walls*)

3 Constanza, my beloved, am I near to you at last?
Are you really a prisoner here? If so, how can I enter? How can I speak to you?

(*Belmonte, seeing someone approaching, quickly hides. Osmin enters.*)

No. 2: Aria and Duet

Osmin

4 You may think you've found a maiden
who'll be faithful all her life.

You should charm her with your kisses,
give her tender sweet caresses,
be her comfort, be her friend.
Tra-la-le-ra, tra-la-le-ra *etc.*

Belmonte (*coming out of his hiding place*)

Hey, friend! Is this the Pasha Selim's palace?

Osmin

But to make quite sure she's faithful,
lock the door and turn the key.

For you'll find the dainty creature
has a restless, roving nature,
far too fond of liberty.

Tra-la-le-ra, tra-la-le-ra *etc.*

Belmonte (*interrupting again*)

Hey! You there! Are you deaf! Is this the Pasha Selim's palace?

Osmin

Most of all you must be careful
when the moon is shining bright,
for it's then she welcomes danger
from the first young handsome stranger.
Then to virtue say goodnight.

Tra-la-le-ra, tra-la-le-ra *etc.*

Belmonte

5 The devil take you and your song, sir,
I've had to listen far too long, sir.
There's something I should like to ask.

Osmin

And who are you to talk to me sir,
to brag and boast and worry me sir?
Who are you?
Hurry I must go!

Belmonte

Is that the Pasha Selim's house?

Osmin

Eh?

Belmonte

Is that the Pasha Selim's house?

Osmin

That is the Pasha Selim's house.

Belmonte

A moment please!

Osmin

O what a worry!

Belmonte

A word!

Osmin

Be quick, I'm in a hurry, *etc.*

Belmonte

Are you in service here, my friend?

Osmin

Eh? *etc.*

Osmin

I am in service here, my friend.

Belmonte

How can I speak to young Pedrillo
for I am told he's working here?

Osmin

The villain, I should like to hang him.
Find out yourself, I will not tell.

Belmonte

Of all the rude and surly fellows! *etc.*

Osmin

Pedrillo's right place is the gallows! *etc.*

Belmonte

You're wrong, he is a fine young man.

Osmin

I'm right, I'll hang him if I can.

Belmonte

It's very plain you do not know him, *etc.*

Osmin

I'd like to throw him to the devil, *etc.*

Belmonte

He is an honest simple soul, *etc.*

Osmin

I'd stick his head upon a pole, *etc.*

Belmonte

But listen here –

Osmin

What is it now?

Belmonte

But wait a bit!

Osmin

What is it now?

Belmonte

I want to enter here.

Osmin (*sarcastically*)

You want to enter here,
to prowl around here and steal our women.
Off, for we don't want you in the place.

Belmonte

You may refuse me, but why abuse me?
I haven't hurt you, and yet you
fling a lot of insults in my face!

Osmin

It's stuff and nonsense, I've had enough! *etc.*

Belmonte

You cannot scare me with all your bluff, *etc.*

Osmin

Go to the devil, you shall be punished.
You will be flogged without mercy.
Be off, I say!

Belmonte

You are a madman – no doubt about it

if that's the way you answer my question.
Now do keep calm and show some sense.

(*Belmonte leaves.*)

Osmin

[6] There – I got rid of him. If only I could get rid
of Pedrillo as easily. But he's done nothing but
curry favour with the Pasha since he was bought
as a slave – a slave – huh!
Pedrillo? Is that you? Come here!

(*Pedrillo comes in from the gardens.*)

Pedrillo

Well – how is everything, Osmin? The Pasha not
back yet?

Osmin

If you want to know go and look.

Pedrillo

Oh come, Osmin. Why must you always be so
hostile?

Osmin

Why? Because I hate the sight of you.

No. 3: Aria

Osmin

[7] These young men who go a-spying,
always after women prying –
yes, I hate them all like sin,
oh, I hate them all like sin.
Such young gentlemen spend all their time

into our business prying,
but I, I'm not taken in;
but I, I'm not taken in.
All your plotting, all your spying,
all your scheming, all your lying,
it will never pay.

If you could deceive me,
you'd be smart – believe me.

I have some sense too –
yes, I have some sense too.

These young men who go a-spying, *etc.*
Night and day I think it over.

By the Prophet's beard I swear
somehow I shall soon discover
how to make you dance on air, *etc.*

Pedrillo

You're a murderous old cut-throat, aren't you?
What have I done to you? Nothing!

Osmin

You have a fiendish, scoundrelly face.
That is enough!

First of all, have you tortur'd,
after that, I'll have you slaughter'd.
Have you fried, have you toasted,
have you boiled, I'll have you roasted, *etc.*
First of all, have you tortur'd, *etc.*

(*Osmin goes into the Palace.*)

Pedrillo

[8] Out! Thank God he's gone, suspicious old toad.
But let him wait. I haven't finished with him yet!
Oh no!

(*Belmonte enters.*)

Belmonte (*astonished*)
Pedrillo!

Pedrillo (*equally surprised*)

Señor Belmonte! Dear Señor Belmonte!
It can't be! I'd begun to think I'd never see you
again!

(*They embrace.*)

Belmonte

Are you all right, Pedrillo?

Pedrillo

Yes, sir. And you?

Belmonte

Yes, yes, of course – but tell me – I hardly dare
ask you. Donna Constanza – is she still alive?

Pedrillo

Indeed, sir, she is!

Belmonte

Oh thank God! And well?

Pedrillo

And well – considering what we've been through.

Belmonte

And the English girl? Her maid?

Pedrillo

Blonda? Oh yes, she's here too.

Belmonte

Thank heaven I sent you to escort them, Pedrillo. What would have become of them alone? In the hands of pirates!

Pedrillo

Don't worry sir – we're all three safe and sound. But *how* did you find us?

Belmonte

I have searched the entire Mediterranean for you! Finally in Sicily I heard your ship had been captured by pirates and taken into Constantinople! And there I found a slave dealer who remembered you and he sent me here. Who is this Pasha Selim?

Pedrillo

He's the man who bought us. And he's treated us very well. Of course, Blonda and I have to work. I'm in charge of the gardens.

Belmonte

And Constanza? Does she have to work too?

Pedrillo

Oh no! Good heavens no! He's in love with her! It was love at first sight, sir.

Belmonte (*horrified*)

What?

Pedrillo

Oh, she's not in love with him! I didn't mean that –

Belmonte

You mean she's faithful to me?

Pedrillo

But of course, sir, you should know her too well to doubt that.

Belmonte

But she's in his power – suppose he forces her –

Pedrillo

No. What he wants is her consent. It's curious, but he's a gentleman. Of course he's pressing very hard but I can tell you that his suit, so far, has been stubbornly rejected. I wish I felt as confident about my lovely Blonda. Unluckily the Pasha gave her to his steward, Osmin – and he's no gentleman at all.

Belmonte

Now listen, Pedrillo. This is my plan of escape. Out there, beyond the headland, I have a ship. All I have to do is to make a signal and a boat will be sent ashore to take us off.

Pedrillo

Oh but wait a minute, wait a minute, sir. It's not going to be as easy as that. We shall have to get the women out and they're heavily guarded – eunuchs – with scimitars.

Belmonte

Where is Constanza now?

Pedrillo

The Pasha's taken her sailing, but they should be returning soon. I'll go and see. No, no, you wait here!

No. 4: Aria

Belmonte

⁹ Constanza! Constanza!

To see you once more – you!

¹⁰ Oh what trembling, oh what passion

fills my anxious beating heart, *etc.*

Once again to be united,

never from my love to part.

Uncertain I falter, my senses betray me as hope is revived in my heart, *etc.*

Was that her whisper?

I dare not believe it.

Was that her sighing?

My spirit with hope is filled.

Does love deceive me, was it a dream? *etc.*

Pedrillo (*entering*)

¹¹ They're coming, sir, they're coming! Now you will have to keep out of sight! And when I have a chance to introduce you, I'll say that you're – let me see – a well-known architect – visiting the famous palaces of Turkey. He'll be flattered! He'll show you everything! You'll have the run of the place! Out of sight now, quickly sir. Into the gardens, through here, follow me.

(*The Pasha enters with Constanza and attendants.*)

He is greeted by his guards and ladies from the harem.)

No. 5: Chorus

¹² Sing to the mighty Pasha Selim songs of loyalty and joy.

May our praises bid him welcome as we lead him from the shore.

Blow, gentle breezes, whisper around him, carry him softly, gentling rippling waves, birds of the air, O sing him your chorus, echo the love that sings in his heart.

Sing to the mighty Pasha Selim, *etc.*

(*Guards, attendants and ladies leave.*)

Pasha Selim

¹³ Always so sad, my beloved. Don't you think it strange, Constanza, that I can love you so much – and yet I've never even seen you smile? Sometimes I try to imagine it. Of course I cannot order you to smile. I cannot order you to love me. I could force you to pretend. But that is not what I desire. What I desire is your love, Constanza – given of your own free will.

Constanza

Pasha Selim, you are a most generous man. If I could return your touching devotion – I would.

Selim

But Constanza, *why* can't you? Tell me. Tell me your thoughts, my beloved – just for once tell me your thoughts.

No. 6: Aria

Constanza

¹⁴ How I loved him, I was happy,

I knew not the pain of love;
when I promised my beloved
to be true for evermore.

All too swiftly we were parted,
hours of joy were all too brief.
Now with tears my eyes are blinded,
and my heart is torn with grief.
How I loved him, I was happy, *etc.*

¹⁵ Pasha Selim, I'll be your slave until the end of
my life. But don't ask me to love you, because I
cannot.

Selim (*harshly*)

Constanza, you are ungrateful! Have you
forgotten that you owe me your life?

Constanza

Please, grant me a little longer to forget my grief
– if I *can* forget it.

Selim

You have until tomorrow to make up your mind.

Constanza (*as she goes*)

Tomorrow...

(*Constanza goes into the harem.*)

Selim (*overcome*)

I threaten her – but these are empty threats. Her
pain, her tears, even her loyalty to another man

enchant me and command my admiration. This
must be love indeed that makes me love still
more what I should hate. Yes – this must be love
indeed.

(*Selim goes towards the palace door. Pedrillo and
Belmonte emerge from the hiding place.*)

Pedrillo

May we disturb Your Highness's exalted
meditation?

Selim (*graciously*)

What is it Pedrillo? Who is this?

Pedrillo

This gentleman, Your Highness, is one of the
most distinguished architects in the whole of
Italy. Having heard of Your Highness's beautiful
palaces, he has travelled all this way to see them
and he hopes – knowing of Your Highness's lofty
architectural ambitions – to have the honour of
placing himself at the service of Your Most
Exalted Highness.

Belmonte (*with an elaborate bow*)

Sir, I should indeed be happy if Your Highness
would deign to take advantage of my modest
talents.

Selim

I shall be pleased to talk of architecture with
such a distinguished visitor. Tomorrow you may
show me some of your drawings. Pedrillo, let our
guest have the freedom of the palace and see that

he has everything he needs.

(*to Belmonte*)

Good day, Sir.

Belmonte (*bowing again*)

Good day, Your Highness – and thank you.

(*The Pasha goes into the palace.*)

Pedrillo (*sotto voce*)

Triumph! Triumph! Oh well done, Sir, well
done!

Belmonte

At last! At last I've seen her! The best, the truest!
My beautiful Constanza! Oh, Pedrillo, I nearly
lost my head and came rushing out to seize her
in my arms!

Pedrillo

Hm. Well I'm glad you didn't. You'd have lost it
in more ways than one. We must be quick – but
we must be careful too.

Belmonte

Pedrillo, I must speak to her!

Pedrillo

Very well. We'll go inside. But if you set the
slightest value on our lives be very discreet, sir.
The Bastinado and the gallows are as common as
breakfast here – and the very flowers have ears.
Come along.

(*They go to the palace entrance but just before they
reach it Osmin enters and bars their way.*)

Osmin

Where do you think you're going?

Pedrillo

Inside!

Osmin

And who is this?

Pedrillo

This gentleman is in the Pasha's service.

Osmin

He could be in the Hangman's service for all I
care – but he's not going inside.

Belmonte

Let me tell you you're dealing with a man of
rank.

Pedrillo

Osmin, you idiot! He's the Pasha's new architect.

Osmin

Then you'd better tell him what happened to the
old one.

Pedrillo (*angrily*)

Get out of the way! The Pasha told me to show
him round!

Osmin

What!

Pedrillo

Out of the way!

No. 7: Trio

Osmin

¹⁶ March, march, march, off you go,
or else the bastinado will help you on your way.

Belmonte and Pedrillo

Now, now, now, you will be sorry
you've treated us this way.

Osmin

Don't you come near me.

Belmonte and Pedrillo

Now clear the doorway.

Osmin

I shall explode, *etc.*

Belmonte and Pedrillo

Let's go inside, *etc.*

Osmin

Quick march! *etc.*

Belmonte and Pedrillo

Stand back! *etc.*

Pedrillo and Belmonte

We're not afraid, now in we go, *etc.*

Osmin

You shan't go in! *etc.*

Osmin

March, march, march, off you go,
or else the bastinado will help you on your way.
You shan't go in! *etc.*

Belmonte and Pedrillo

Now in we go, *etc.*
Now, now, now, you will be very sorry.
Ha, ha, ha, ha, *etc.*

Osmin

Clear off, clear off, clear off!

Belmonte and Pedrillo

Stand back, stand back, stand back!

Osmin

I shall explode, *etc.*

Belmonte and Pedrillo

Now in we go, *etc.*

*(Belmonte and Pedrillo finally manage to push past
Osmin and go into the palace.)*

Act II

*(Osmin is sitting on a garden divan, with a low
table in front of him laden with fruit and
sweetmeats. Blonda stands fanning him.)*

Osmin

¹⁷ Tra-la-le-ra. Tra-la-le-ra. Why are these grapes
not cooled? Why have you not peeled them?

Blonda

You! Will you never stop grumbling and bullying?

Osmin

Ha, ha, ha!

Blonda

Oh! Leave me alone!

Osmin

I'll do what I like.

Blonda

Not with me, you won't.

Osmin

You seem to forget that you're in Turkey now
and I'm your master.

Blonda

Oh, nonsense!

Osmin

But it isn't nonsense – the Pasha gave you
to me!

Blonda *(withering)*

'Gave' me to you? What do you think I am?
A box of Turkish Delight?

Osmin

He *gave* you to me. Don't you understand?
You're my slave!

Blonda

Well, you'd better not treat me like one. You'll
get nothing out of me by barking commands.

No. 8: Aria

Blonda

¹⁸ With smiles and kind caresses,
with tenderness and teasing,
a man has hope of pleasing
a gentle maiden's heart.

But surliness and rudeness,
and bawling, scolding, nagging,
will only bring disaster,
and love will soon depart, *etc.*
With smiles and kind caresses, *etc.*
With gentleness and kindness, *etc.*

Osmin

¹⁹ Gentleness! Kindness! Who the devil put all that
stuff into your head?
(aside)
She'll drive me crazy!
(to Blonda)
Look here, Blonda – I order you to love me.

Blonda

I don't suppose I should love you, if you were
the last male on the face of the earth. What you
can't you get into your head is that I am English.
And in England women are treated with
profound respect. They are never ordered to do
anything. They are asked what they would *like* to
do. That is what happens in England.

Osmin

Yes. And I believe the climate also leaves much
to be desired.
(amorously)
Oh, Blonda –
(He puts his arm round her.)

Blonda

Hands off, or I'll hit you!

Osmin

I'll wager you don't talk to Pedrillo like that. I've got an eye on you two. Though what you see in him I can't imagine.

Blonda

What I see in Pedrillo is a handsome, adorable man. And what I see in you is a pompous old wind-bag.

Osmin (*furiously*)

I've had enough! Into the house! At once!

Blonda

Certainly not, I will *not* go into the house! My mistress told me to meet her here. And incidentally don't forget that the Pasha will do *anything* for her. One word from her – that's all it needs to get you fifty lashes!

Osmin

She's a devil!

(*Osmin goes towards his door in a fury but turns back.*)

No. 9: Duet

Osmin

^[20] I'm going, but mark what I say and don't let Pedrillo come near you.

Blonda

I'm taking no orders from you, you know that I cannot abide them.

Osmin

Now promise.

Blonda

It's time you were gone.

Osmin

The devil!

Blonda

Go, leave me alone!

Osmin

By Allah, I don't mean to leave you, *etc.* till you swear obedience to me.

Blonda

Obey you, obey you.
Oh no, sir, oh no, sir.
Not if you were the Pasha himself, *etc.*

Osmin

^[21] O Englishmen you must be crazy, such freedom to grant to your women.

Blonda

The woman who's born into freedom, will never surrender to slav'ry. And though you may put her in prison she still remains free as a queen.

Osmin

Oh how we'd be scorned and derided if ever we had such ideas.

Blonda

The woman who's born, *etc.*

Osmin

O Englishmen, *etc.*

Blonda

Be off now!

Osmin

You say that to me? *etc.*

Blonda

I warn you!

Osmin

And here I shall stay! *etc.*

Blonda

Whatever you say, you are going, *etc.*

Osmin

Was ever so brazen a hussy? *etc.*

Blonda

I'll scratch out your eyes in a moment. You'd better be off while you can.

Osmin

I'm only too happy to leave you. I beg you to spare me the blow.

Blonda

^[22] Be off now!

Osmin

You say that to me?

Blonda

I warn you!

Osmin

And here I shall stay.

Blonda

Whatever you say, you are going!

Osmin

Was ever so brazen a hussy?

Blonda

I'll scratch out your eyes, *etc.*

Osmin

I'm only too happy to leave you. I'm going as fast as I can! *etc.*

(*Blonda, laughing, pushes Osmin into his house. Then she turns and stops dead as she sees Constanza coming out of the harem for her evening walk in the garden.*)

Blonda

^[23] Ah, there's Constanza – but how sad she looks.

No. 10: Recitative and Aria

Constanza

^[24] Oh what sorrow overwhelms my spirit, since the day when fate decreed our parting. Belmonte, here in my exile I recall those days of endless pleasure. Nothing now is left me; only pain and suffering. Nothing now remains but unavailing tears.

^[25] Endless grief tortures my spirit, from my love forever torn, *etc.*

Like the faded rose of autumn,
like the withered grass in winter,
fades my hopeless life away.
Oft I tell the gentle breezes
all my spirit's bitter smart.
But the breezes will not hear me.
They return all my lamenting
to my sore and lonely heart.
Endless grief tortures my spirit, *etc.*
Oft I tell the gentle breezes... *etc.*
...to my sore and broken heart.

COMPACT DISC TWO

Blonda

1 Señorita, try – try – not to lose hope.

Constanza

Blonda, if the sun goes down today without our
having news, there'll *be* no hope.

Blonda

Oh! Señorita, don't despair, just think, Belmonte
must find us soon.

(Trying to be cheerful.)

How do we know he won't arrive tomorrow with
a ransom?

Constanza

Don't breathe the word 'tomorrow', I dare not
think of it.

(Blonda sees the Pasha approaching from the palace.)

Señorita! The Pasha, he's here!

Constanza

Don't let him see me!

Blonda

Too late! Speak to him wisely, Señorita. And
above all, don't anger him.

(Blonda goes into Osmin's house as the Pasha enters.)

Pasha Selim

Well Constanza? Have you changed your mind?

Constanza

Pasha Selim, it is not my mind that must be
changed – it is my heart. That you will never do
– and nor shall I.

Selim

And you don't fear what tomorrow may bring?

Constanza

No, I do not. I know that all I can expect is
death.

Selim *(furiously)*

Not death – but tortures, unrelenting tortures.

No. 11: Aria

Constanza

2 Tortures unrelenting
may for me be waiting.

I disdain them, I disdain them,
all your tortures I disdain.

No fear, no force
shall make me alter,

but one thing could make me falter.

If I ever should betray my love –
one thing would make me falter;
if my love I should betray.

If you do love me
let me go free.

And heaven above you
will bless the deed, *etc.*

If you do love me, *etc.*

If your heart you harden

I will gladly suffer pain and grief.

Order me, compel me,
bind me, force me, slay me.

At last release will come in death, *etc.*

If you do love me, *etc.*

If your heart you harden, *etc.*

(Constanza runs into the gardens.)

Selim

3 She shows no sign of weakening. The thought of
death – so far from breaking – seems to
strengthen her resolve. The more I threaten her
the more her courage mounts. As to my gifts –
she spurns them. But what other method is
there? I must find a way.

*(Exit Selim into the palace. As the Pasha goes into
the palace, Pedrillo enters with a conspiratorial air
and knocks timidly on Osmin's door.)*

Pedrillo

4 Blonda? Come here, quickly.

(Blonda comes out of the house, rather hesitantly.)

Blonda

What is it?

Pedrillo

I've got wonderful news.

Blonda

What?

Pedrillo

The señor is here, Blonda!

Blonda *(unable to believe it)*

The señor?

Pedrillo

Hm!

Blonda

Here?

Pedrillo

Yes.

Blonda

Oh! Señor Belmonte? Is this true?

(As Pedrillo nods vigorously.)

But when did –

Pedrillo

Now don't start firing off a lot of questions. I'm
telling you he's here. He's in the palace! He's the
Pasha's guest! And he has a ship waiting beyond
the headland.

Blonda *(overjoyed)*

Heavens! Pedrillo! I must go and tell Constanza.

Pedrillo

Ah! Wait, wait. Tell her the senor will be underneath her widow at midnight. My singing is the signal for you both to be ready to leave.

Blonda

What about Osmin?

Pedrillo

Don't worry, I'll take care of him. I'm going to ram a sleeping draught down that old vulture's neck if it's the last thing I do. Keep watch for a minute while I go and get it.

(Pedrillo goes into the palace.)

No. 12: Aria

Blonda

5 Oh the happy, happy day,
all the world is bright and gay.
Now my lady I must see her,
say her lover's here to free her,
and with laughter I can cheer her
say her lover now is near her,
bringing joy to her again.
Oh what joyful news to tell her
and what comfort I shall bring her.
With my laughter I can cheer her,
tell her that her lover's near her.
And with pleasure she will smile again,
after days of weary pain,
she will smile again, etc.

(Pedrillo comes back with a basket containing two large flasks of wine, as well as two goblets and a small bottle of sleeping draught.)

Pedrillo

6 Any sign of Osmin?

Blonda

No.

Pedrillo

Now listen. I've just spoken to Señor Belmonte. He insists on seeing the señorita now – if only for a few minutes. I told him to be here in half an hour's time – after I've dealt with Osmin. Now go into the garden, Blonda.

Keep watch, and as soon as you see me here alone with Señor Belmonte bring Constanza to us. You understand?

Blonda

Perfectly. Rely on me, Pedrillo. And good luck!

(Blonda goes into the gardens. Pedrillo turns towards Osmin's door.)

Pedrillo

Thank you, I'll need it. Well – now for it!
(going to door)
Oh dear, he who hesitates is lost.

(He raises his hand to knock on Osmin's door but is far too nervous to do so.)

No. 13: Aria

Pedrillo

7 Now Pedrillo, now for battle!
Only cowards are afraid.
Do not waver, do not tremble.
Is it fear that makes you shiver?
Youth and courage must prevail.
Ah no – I shall not fail, etc.
Only cowards are afraid, etc.
Now Pedrillo, now for battle!
Only cowards are afraid. etc.

(Pedrillo plucks up courage to go and knock on Osmin's door. Having done so he hurries to where he has left the wine. Osmin opens the door.)

Osmin

8 What do you want?

Pedrillo

I just wanted to drink your health. That's all.

Osmin (suspiciously)

Drink my health? Why? Huh? Why are you so cheerful?

Pedrillo

Well it's no good being an old kill-joy, and cheerfulness runs in the family. Besides, wine always helps to keep you happy and optimistic. You know, your father Mahomet made a terrible mistake when he forbade wine.

Osmin

Ah! It's poison.

Pedrillo

Oh, you're always talking about poison and plots, and stabs in the back. Come on, be friendly, have a drink.

Osmin

Mahomet would never allow it.

Pedrillo

Mahomet's asleep, and in any case he has much more important things to bother about than you.

Osmin (looking greedily at the wine)
Well – I don't know, what wine is it?

Pedrillo (opening the bottle)
Cyprus.

Osmin (impressed)

Cyprus! Hum – that's a very good wine indeed – or so I've been told.

Pedrillo

There you are. Taste it.

Osmin

Well, there's no harm in that, I suppose.

Pedrillo

Oh, don't sip it – drink it off – or you won't get the full effect.

Osmin

Oh! Oh! Oh! No wonder it's forbidden!

Pedrillo

Have some more!

Osmin

Oh no – no! Well – I suppose –

Pedrillo

Y'know, you and I are going to be good friends, Osmin. There's nothing like wine for creating a brotherly feeling.

Osmin

It seems the Prophet *did* make a slight mistake in forbidding this. Perhaps if we drink to the Prophet's health he won't be too annoyed.

Pedrillo

Oh no. It's Bacchus we must drink to, brother Osmin.

Osmin (*a shade recklessly*)

All right! I don't mind whom we drink to!

No. 14: Duet

(*During which they drink copiously and Pedrillo steals Osmin's keys.*)

Pedrillo

9 Here's to Bacchus, long live Bacchus, Bacchus is the man for me! *etc.*

Osmin

Dare I risk it, dare I drink it? What if Allah looks my way?

Pedrillo

Now do not waver, drink up, man, go on, man, no longer delay!

Osmin

There, I have drunk it, wine I have tasted. They say nothing venture, nothing gain.

Pedrillo and Osmin

We'll drink to the ladies, the young and the pretty, the fair and the dark ones. Long life to the ladies, we drink their health!

Pedrillo

That's delicious!

Osmin

That's prodigious!

Pedrillo and Osmin

Ah, 'tis fit for gods to drink. Here's to Bacchus, long live Bacchus, Bacchus who invented wine! *etc.* We'll drink to the ladies, *etc.*

Pedrillo

10 What do you say, brother Osmin? Shall we finish the bottle?

Osmin

Ouf! What a wonderful selsaintion.

(*He listens to this sentence, after speaking it, rather uneasily.*)

Pedrillo

You are tired, aren't you?

Osmin

Hm. Hm. Do you drink I've think more than I should?

Pedrillo

Oh, you'll be all right in the morning. Come on, I'll put you to bed – it's getting late.

Osmin

What is?

Pedrillo

I beg your pardon?

Osmin

What's getting late?

Pedrillo (*irritably*)

What do you mean, what's getting late? *It's* getting late.

Osmin (*swaying, but trying hard to understand*)

All of it?

Pedrillo (*impatiently*)

Oh, get off to bed, you half-witted old pike.

Osmin

I don't *want* to go to bed, you old kill-joy.

Pedrillo

But you must, we can't stay out here. The Pasha might discover us.

Osmin

Oh, if you dare betray me –

Pedrillo

Oh, come along, brother Osmin, this way. Off we go.

(*Pedrillo eventually gets Osmin to the door of his house.*)

Osmin

Where are we going to, brother Peddle? Are we going far?

Pedrillo

You're not. But *I* am.

(*Pedrillo dumps his burden in the house.*)

Osmin

Tra-la-le-ra, *etc.*

Pedrillo

Goodnight Osmin! Sleep well!

(*As he comes back, Belmonte enters.*)

Belmonte

Well done, Pedrillo! I didn't think he would succumb so easily!

Pedrillo

It was a new selsaintion for him. He'll have another new sensation in the morning.

Belmonte

Where is the señorita?

(*Pedrillo goes and looks into the gardens. Then he turns to Belmonte again.*)

Pedrillo

Señor – she's here!

*(Pedrillo goes out to find Blonda.)
(Constanza enters from the gardens.)*

Belmonte

Constanza!

(They rush into each other's arms and embrace.)

Constanza

¹¹ Belmonte! Is it possible, after so much anguish, that I am in your arms again?

Belmonte

Don't cry, my Love, don't cry.

No. 15: Aria

Belmonte

¹² When our hearts are overflowing
and our cheeks are wet with tears of joy,
from your face to kiss those tears away
is the lover's sweetest, best reward.
Ah, Constanza, thus to see you,
oh what rapture, what enchantment!
In my loving arms to hold you
is a prize beyond compare, *etc.*
When our hearts are overflowing, *etc.*
Now that once more we are together,
deep in our hearts, we shall remember
what despair all parting brings, *etc.*

No. 16: Quartet

Constanza

¹³ Ah, Belmonte, ah my dear one!

Belmonte

Ah, Constanza, my beloved!

Constanza

Do I see you, do I hear you!
Are you here at last to cheer me
after days of cruel pain?

Belmonte

Oh, what joy at last to find you!
Sorrow now is far behind you.
Now with joy we smile again.

Constanza

Ah, for joy my tears are falling.

Belmonte

All our tender love recalling.

Constanza

Hope henceforth my star shall be.

Belmonte

Yes, today you shall be free.
Yes, today you shall be free.

Constanza

Only hope henceforth my star shall be.

(Pedrillo and Blonda enter discussing their escape.)

Pedrillo

Now, my Blonda, are you ready?
When the midnight hour is near
we must steal away from here.

Blonda

Oh Pedrillo, I'll not fail you.
I am counting every minute.
When the midnight hour is near
I'll be with you, never fear.

All

Dawns at last the happy morning,
now the weary night is past.
With enchantment, hope is waking,
love will triumph now at last.
With enchantment, hope is waking, *etc.*

Belmonte

¹⁴ And yet within my heart
where pain should have no part,
there lies a secret sorrow.

Constanza

My love, what can it be?
Oh tell me what is wrong?
Speak out – no more delaying.

Belmonte

They say – I hear – that you –

Constanza

I'm waiting!

Pedrillo

There's just one point now, Blonda.

have you been true to me?
Have you been true?

Blonda

You fool! You dare to doubt me!
The question, sir, you ask
might well be put to you!

Pedrillo

About Osmin – about Osmin – about Osmin –

Blonda

Go on then!

Constanza

Hide it from me no longer.

Belmonte

They say –

Pedrillo

About Osmin –

Belmonte

That you –

Pedrillo

About Osmin –

Constanza

I'm waiting!

Blonda

Go on then!

Constanza

Tell me for pity's sake.

Belmonte
 [15] I will. Ah, blame me not...
 A rumour reached my ears,
 I scarcely dare to tell it.
 Ah, let your words dispel it.
 Have you been true to me?

Pedrillo
 I wonder if Osmin –
 We know he had a right,
 as Lord and Master –
 and then suppose he had insisted?
 I'd have a wretched bargain!

Constanza
 Ah, how you wound my heart!
 (*Blonda slaps Pedrillo.*)

Blonda
 That's my reply to you!

Pedrillo
 Now you've made it clear!

Belmonte
 Constanza, ah forgive!

Blonda
 You're not worth my love!

Constanza
 You ask if I've been true.

Blonda
 Pedrillo now declares
 I have another lover.

Constanza
 Belmonte has been told
 the Pasha is my lover.

Pedrillo
 My Blonda has been true,
 there's no two ways about it!

Belmonte
 Constanza's true to me,
 let no one dare to doubt it.

Constanza
 Belmonte has been told
 the Pasha is my lover.

Blonda
 Pedrillo now declares
 I have another lover.

Belmonte
 Constanza's true to me,
 let no one dare to doubt it.

Pedrillo
 My Blonda has been true,
 there's no two ways about it!

Constanza and Blonda
 [16] If men mistrust our honour
 and think we are deceivers,
 they look on us with scorn;
 such conduct can't be borne.

Belmonte and Pedrillo
 When women's hearts are grieving
 at being thought deceivers.

Then faithful they must be,
 from all reproaches free.

Pedrillo
 Dearest Blonda, please forgive me!
 I am full of shame, believe me.
 Any penance I'll not shirk.

Blonda
 No! Your pleading is rejected.
 So unjustly to suspect me
 with a fat and foolish Turk.

Belmonte
 Ah, Constanza! Ah, beloved!
 I implore you to forgive
 the foolish fear I rashly spoke.

Constanza
 How, Belmonte, you could think it;
 that my love for you could alter,
 that my heart could ever change!

Blonda
 Your pleading is rejected, *etc.*

Pedrillo
 Dearest Blonda, ah, forgive me, *etc.*

Belmonte
 Ah, Constanza! Ah, beloved! *etc.*

Belmonte
 Ah forgive me!

Pedrillo
 Ah, forgive me!

Belmonte
 I'm repentant!

Pedrillo
 I'm repentant!

Constanza and Blonda
 I believe you, and forgive you.

All
 Make an end of doubt and pain,
 yes, an end of doubt and pain.
 May love now be lasting.
 For nothing shall kindle
 the fires of jealousy
 back into flame, *etc.*

Constanza and Blonda
 No word, no deed,
 shall kindle jealousy back into flame.

Belmonte and Pedrillo
 ...the fires of jealousy
 back into flame, *etc.*

All
 May love now be lasting, *etc.*
 No word, no deed,
 shall kindle jealousy back into flame, *etc.*

(They see a Guard approaching outside the locked gates. Constanza hurries into the harem and Pedrillo locks her in with Osmin's keys – in case the Guards on their rounds try the door. Blonda goes into Osmin's house, Belmonte back to the palace)

and Pedrillo into the gardens – to wait until it is safer to make their escape.)

Act III

(The time is shortly before twelve, the same night. Belmonte has crept out of the house to meet Pedrillo. He has been signalling the boat from his window.)

No. 17: Aria

Belmonte

¹⁷ Love, only love, can now direct me.
My faith in love will never die.
With love to keep me and protect me,
all threat'ning dangers I'll defy.
With love alone to help me,
all threat'ning dangers I'll defy.
We try in vain the world may say,
yet love will always find a way.
Love, only love, can now direct me, etc.
(Pedrillo comes in with his guitar.)

¹⁸ Ah, Pedrillo! Is everything well?

Pedrillo

The palace is asleep, Señor. Is the boat on the beach?

Belmonte

Not yet.

Pedrillo

Are you sure they saw the signal?

Belmonte

Certain.

Pedrillo

Oh, go and look again while I begin my song to warn the ladies.

Belmonte

Are they not watching for us?

Pedrillo

Listening, Señor. It's safer – you can't be seen listening. As soon as she hears my song, the señorita will come to the window of the harem and I will meet Blonda at Osmin's door. Oh, I hope that sleeping draught is still working.

Belmonte

Suppose someone else hears you.

Pedrillo

Oh, no one will be surprised – I sing out here almost every night.

Belmonte

Where is the ladder?

Pedrillo *(impatiently)*

Oh, it's here. Señor. It's here! Do for goodness sake go and look for the boat!

(He gives Osmin's keys to Belmonte to open the courtyard gates.)

No. 18: Romance

Pedrillo

¹⁹ In Moorish lands a maiden fair
in prison sadly cried.

Lovely her face and dark her hair,
weeping she pined in her despair,
for liberty she sighed,
for liberty she sighed.
Hither there came a gallant knight
who heard the pris'ner cry.
Touched by the maiden's wretched plight
vowed that to free her he would fight,
and rescue her or die,
and rescue her or die.

Belmonte *(returning)*

It's here, it's here. The boat is on the shore.

Pedrillo

Yes, but where is the señorita?

Belmonte

Heaven preserve us, I hope nothing's gone wrong.

Pedrillo

I hope they haven't fallen asleep.

Belmonte

Fallen asleep? At a moment like this?

Pedrillo

Ha, women are capable of anything! I'll sing another verse.

Belmonte

Not another verse, Pedrillo!

Pedrillo

I'll come to you in darkest night,
my love, unlock your door.

I have no fear of arms or might,
we can escape at dead of night,
you'll be free for evermore,
you, free for evermore.
So as he said, at midnight hour
the gallant knight was there,
gently he helped the maiden down
and with the dawn the cell was bare.
The bird had flown, la la,
flown off, la la la la.

Pedrillo

²⁰ Look, she's opening the window.

Belmonte

Constanza, my beloved, come down. Pedrillo will wait for you at the boat. Get Blonda quickly.

Pedrillo

Yes.

(Constanza has come out of the house and she and Belmonte hurry through the courtyard gates toward the harbour.)

Blonda, where are you? Blonda, hurry up!

Blonda

I am coming, Pedrillo.

Pedrillo

Oh, thank heavens. Quickly.

Blonda

I think Osmin's awake.

Osmin (*from the depths of his house*)

Where... what... where... how... Thieves!
Ho there! Guards! Guards!

(*Guards and Servants rush in as Pedrillo and
Blonda try to follow Belmonte and Constanza.*)

Guards (*severally*)

Stop thief! I've got him! Give me the ladder!
Hold him!

Blonda

Stop! Take your hands off me! Stop it, both of
you!

Guards

There they are, sir.

Osmin

Pedrillo... so! It's you! I guessed as much.

(*holding the lantern to Blonda*)

And *you!* My little Blonda! How could you run
off with this low-down cur! So Pedrillo thought
he'd make me drunk...

(*to Pedrillo again, furiously*)

Didn't you? I'll have you tortured to within an
inch of your life for this!

Pedrillo (*desperate*)

It's a joke, brother Osmin. We are only going for
a walk.

Osmin

Well, you'll go for a walk to the torture chamber
now!

Guard

This way.

Pedrillo

Stop!

(*Four more Guards come in, dragging Belmonte
and Constanza. They too are led up to Osmin.*)

Guard

We just found these two, Steward Osmin, down
by the harbour.

Belmonte

Wait! Let me speak!

Osmin (*laughs*)

The architect! By Allah! The architect. And the
lady Constanza. So! You also! Oh – wait till the
Pasha hears of this! The worst crime of all!

(*shaking his fist in Belmonte's face*)

Abduction! Abduction from the harem! This is
punishable by death!

Constanza

Have mercy, Osmin, have mercy on us!

Belmonte

Here is a purse of gold. Allow us to go free and
it is yours.

Osmin

I don't want your gold! I want your heads!
Guards take them away.

Guards

Come on, both of you. Just a moment, you two.

Osmin

Put them all in chains.

(*The Guards drag them all off.*)

No. 19: Aria

Osmin

^[21] My triumphant hour's approaching,
painful death is now encroaching
and the noose is getting tight, *etc.*
I'll be singing, jumping, dancing,
and I'll split my sides with laughing,
then at last I'll have some rest, *etc.*

My triumphant hour's approaching, *etc.*

Like two mice you both came creeping
when you thought we all were sleeping,
but the cat was wide awake.

In his clutches he has caught you,
and he'll very soon have taught you
that you've made a big mistake, *etc.*

Like two mice you both came creeping, *etc.*

(*The Pasha enters from the palace, accompanied by
Attendants and lanterns.*)

Pasha Selim

^[22] What does all this mean? Osmin? What is going
on?

Osmin

An attempted abduction, Your Highness.

Selim (*in a whisper*)

Not the señorita!

Osmin

The señorita, Your Highness.

(*A moment's pause. Selim looks at those around
him. Then his anger explodes.*)

Selim

Who tried to abduct the señorita? He shall die
tonight!

Osmin

The so-called architect and the cunning slave,
Pedrillo, planned to carry off the lady Constanza
and my Blonda.

Selim

Where are they now? Did they get away?

Osmin

Oh no, Your Highness! No one escapes the
watchful eye of Osmin! I caught the four of them
as they were making off. I immediately
surrounded them – and clapped them all in irons.

Selim

Bring the señorita to me! And my so-called guest!

Osmin

Ho there! Guards! Bring them forward.

(*Guards bring on Belmonte and Constanza, in
chains.*)

Selim (*when they are standing before him*)

So – the guest I welcome to my house – was an
enemy. Are you aware what punishment we
reserve in this country for traitors?

Constanza

Sir, I beg you to punish me and me alone – if you will spare Belmonte.

Selim

You dare to plead for this man's life?

Constanza

I plead for more than that, Your Highness – I plead to be allowed to die for him.

Selim (*contemptuously*)

And what is the reason for this noble gesture?

Constanza

He is the only man whom I have ever loved – or ever shall.

Belmonte

Your Highness, let me speak.

Selim

Go on.

(*Belmonte kneels.*)

Belmonte

Pasha Selim, you see before you a Spaniard of noble birth. I have never in my life before gone on my knees to any man. But now I kneel to you, Your Highness, and I beg for mercy – for us both. My father will pay any ransom that you care to name. I beg you send messengers to him now – at his palace in Castile. His name is Lostados.

Selim (*softly, amazed*)

You – are the son – of Don Lostados? The one-time Commandant of Oran?

Belmonte

I am, Your Highness – and proud to be.

Selim (*exploding*)

Proud! You have no reason to be proud! You have reason to be sorry! Oh, what a happy moment is this – for me! How generous of Fate – to throw into my power the son of my most hated enemy!

Belmonte (*in dismay*)

Your enemy? My father?

Selim (*grimly*)

Yes. When I was young I lived in Algiers, where my father was the emissary of the Caliph. And while I was still a youth, the town was sacked by your compatriots. The Spanish soldiers – under your father's generalship – gave themselves up to looting, murder. My father died at your father's hands! All my happiness – position – fortune – everything – was deliberately and ruthlessly destroyed by the General Don Lostados.

(*Dropping his voice.*)

Even my betrothed – my beloved wife-to-be – was taken from me by your father while I lay unconscious, given up for dead. (*Pause.*) Now, after all these years, Fate has decided to redress the balance! Since you're so proud of being your father's son you shall absolve his debt!

(*to Constanza, almost as an afterthought*)

As to you, Constanza – I will grant you one last privilege! You shall watch your lover's torture before you face your own!

(*The Pasha and Selim go into the palace.*)

No. 20: Recitative and Duet

(*During the duet Selim re-enters. He observes Belmonte and Constanza from the shadows at the back.*)

Belmonte

²³ What dreadful fate conspires against us. We are defeated at the final moment. Ah Constanza, through me you now must suffer. O cruel pain!

Constanza

Ah, my beloved, do not grieve so vainly, for what is death? The path to rest and peace. And if with you I share it, it will lead us to new happiness.

Belmonte

Oh my dearest, your love consoles me. It gives me comfort, and from my trembling heart you take away the pain of death. But ah, I drag you to your grave.

²⁴ You must suffer for my rashness.

Ah Constanza, my beloved, can you bear to look upon me? I alone have brought you death! I alone have brought you death!

Constanza

Ah, to save my life you perish, you will perish, yet 'tis I who caused your suffering. I – I who caused your bitter suffering. Let me perish now beside you, yes, perish now beside you. Welcome then will be death's call.

Both

Ah, beloved, life beside you was my hope and all I longed for. It were pain with you away, longer in the world to stay, longer, longer in the world to stay.

Belmonte

You must suffer for my rashness.

Constanza

Ah, to save my life you perish, you will perish.

Belmonte

Ah, Constanza, my beloved, can you bear to look upon me?

Constanza

Yes, 'tis I who cause your suffering, let me perish now beside you.

Belmonte

I alone have caused you death.

Constanza

Welcome then will be death's call.

Belmonte

I alone have caused you death.

Constanza

Welcome, welcome then will be death's call.

Both

Ah beloved, life beside you, *etc.*

Belmonte

²⁶ Then my life I gladly offer.

Constanza

Gladly pain and death I'll suffer.

Both

For in death I'll near you lie, *etc.*

With you beloved,

I am well content to die.

O endless happiness!

If I may die beside you,

I'll die in sweet enchantment.

Your love my heart sustaining,

I'll bid the world farewell.

Yes, gladly, I'll bid the world farewell.

O endless happiness, *etc.*

(Osmin comes out of the palace.)

Osmin

²⁶ Guards! Bring in the two slaves! Come on, come on! Forward! Bring them over here!

(Pedrillo and Blonda are unceremoniously dragged forward, in chains, and placed next to Belmonte and Constanza.)

Pedrillo

Señor, it would seem this is the end of us.

Belmonte

Let us face death calmly, Pedrillo.

Blonda

After all, everyone has to die sooner or later.

Pedrillo

Yes, but everyone doesn't get boiled in oil first!
(The Pasha now comes forward and all turn to him.)

Belmonte

Pasha Selim, we are ready to receive our sentence.

Pasha Selim

And I am ready to pronounce it. Be sure it will be just. Señor Belmonte, if I take vengeance on your father's savagery I shall resemble him. Not only at the moment of my action but for ever. It would distress me to resemble – for the rest of time – someone whom I despise. You may consider, therefore, that this reckoning is blotted out – expunged: discharged and cancelled to the full. You shall not suffer and you shall not die.

Constanza *(involuntarily)*

Oh – thank God!

Belmonte

Your Highness!

Selim

Take your freedom, Belmonte, and when you are once again in fair Castile, inform your father truthfully of what has passed. Tell him that his injustice was atoned for by this act of mercy. If this should make him more humane and merciful himself, then all will be redeemed, and

I shall ask for nothing more.

(slight pause)

Not even from you, Constanza.

Constanza *(softly)*

You mean that I am free as well?

Selim

The love you give to your Belmonte is the only love worth having. It was the love I wanted for myself, but – it is his. Nothing that I can do will ever take it from him. Nothing that I can do will ever make it mine. Therefore, go with him and be happy!

Constanza

My lord, how can we every repay you?

Selim

Remove their chains, Osmin.

(Guards take the chains from Constanza and Belmonte.)

Belmonte

Pasha Selim, this act of grace will never be forgotten.

(Pedrillo edges his way forward.)

Pedrillo

There's just one other little matter outstanding, Your Highness.

Selim

Yes, yes, I know! I haven't forgotten you, Pedrillo!

I probably never shall! You're the worst gardener

I ever had! Go home! And take this young woman

with you.

(to the Guards)

Take off their chains.

Osmin *(indignantly)*

You're not going to pardon *these* two, Your Highness.

Selim

Why not, Osmin? Do you want to end up as a blind old man?

Osmin

Blind? Why should I go blind?

Selim

You certainly would if you married *her* – she'd scratch your eyes out in no time.

(Pedrillo and Blonda, freed of their chains, kneel and kiss the Pasha's hands.)

No. 21: Vaudeville and Chorus

Belmonte

²⁷ Your noble mercy passes measure.

I never can my debt repay.

I know until my dying day

your great example I will treasure.

And if your kindness we forget

then we deserve the fate we get.

Constanza, Blonda, Belmonte, Pedrillo and

Osmin

And if your kindness we forget

then we deserve the fate we get.

Constanza

My grateful thanks to you I offer.
Now I can be Belmonte's wife.
I owe to you my happy life.
My deepest gratitude I offer.
And if your kindness we forget
then we deserve the fate we get.

Constanza, Blonda, Belmonte, Pedrillo and Osmin

And if your kindness we forget
then we deserve the fate we get.

Pedrillo

It is your princely favour surely
that kept my head from noose or sword.
And when at last I'm safe on board
it will sit on my shoulders more securely.
And if your kindness we forget
then we deserve the fate we get.

Constanza, Blonda, Belmonte, Pedrillo and Osmin

And if your kindness we forget
then we deserve the fate we get.

Blonda

A thousand thanks, my gracious master.
May happy years await you too.
And if Osmin escapes disgrace,
let him recall I taught him how to woo.
For if my lesson he forget
a nagging wife will teach him yet.

Osmin

The dogs will drive me to distraction.
They're always snapping at my heels.
I'll let them know just how it feels,
and hope it gives them satisfaction
to get their due reward from me.
First of all they'll be tortur'd,
after that I'll have them slaughter'd.
Have them fried, have them toasted,
have them boiled and have them roasted, *etc.*

Constanza, Blonda, Belmonte and Pedrillo

[28] The nobleman despises vengeance.
His mercy tempers every deed.
And his compassion holds the seed
of noble greatness,
of true and noble greatness.

Constanza

And if this moral we forget
then we deserve the fate we get.

Constanza, Blonda, Belmonte and Pedrillo

And if this moral we forget
then we deserve the fate we get.

Chorus

[29] Pasha Selim, live for ever!
Glorious is his mighty name!
Long live noble Pasha Selim,
full of honour, full of fame!

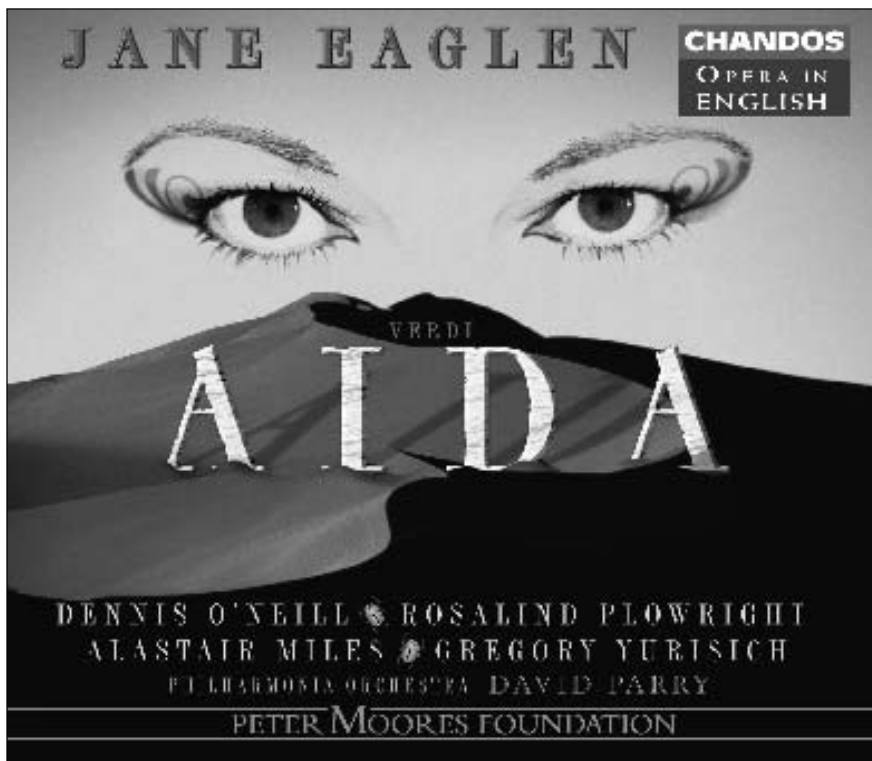
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G. MacDominic

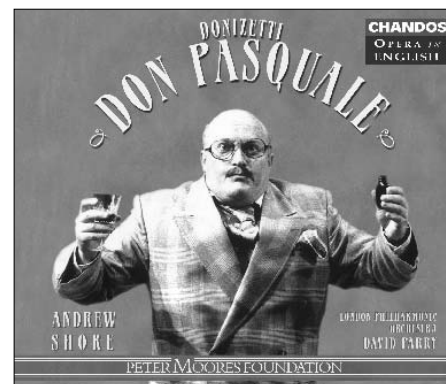
Yehudi Menuhin

Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3074(2)

Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3011(2)

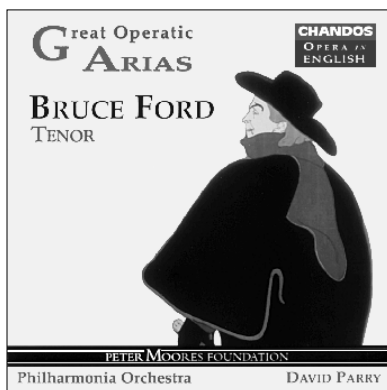


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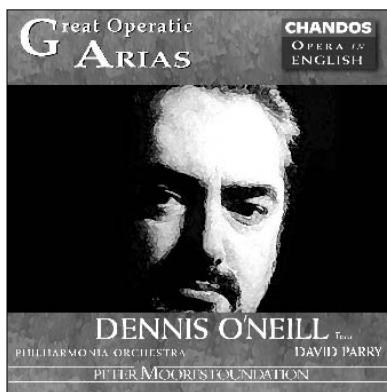


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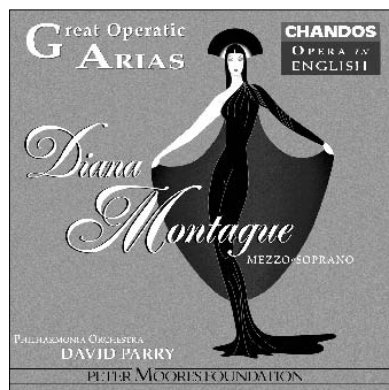
Opera in English on Chandos



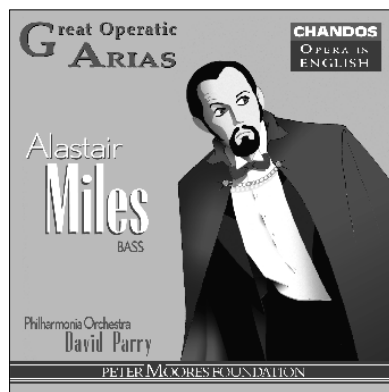
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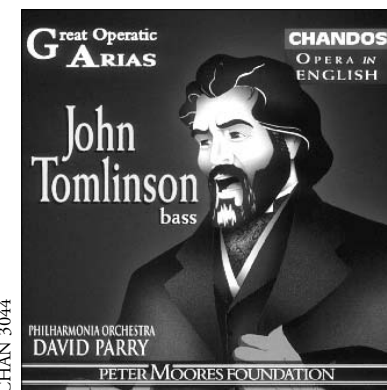


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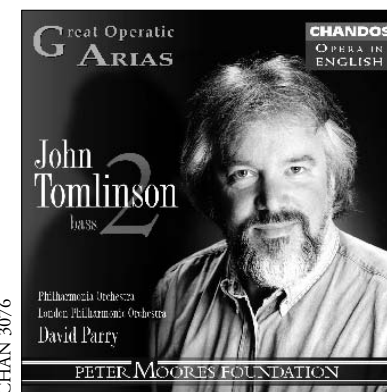


CHAN 3049

Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3044



CHAN 3076

Opera in English on Chandos



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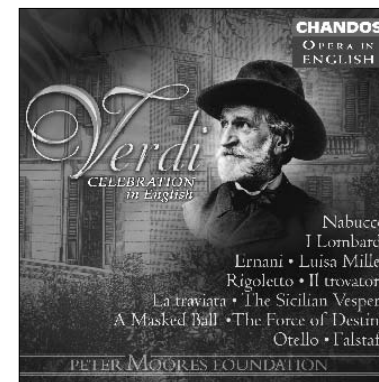
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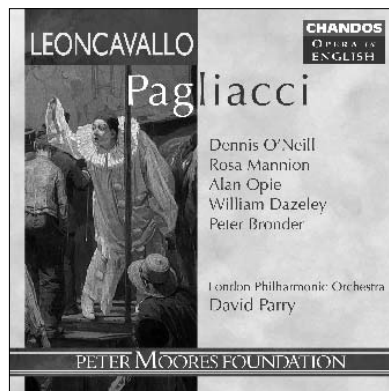


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Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3004



CHAN 3003

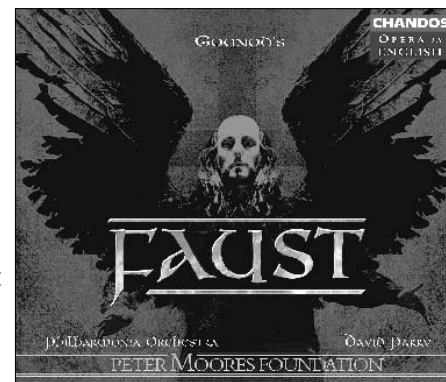


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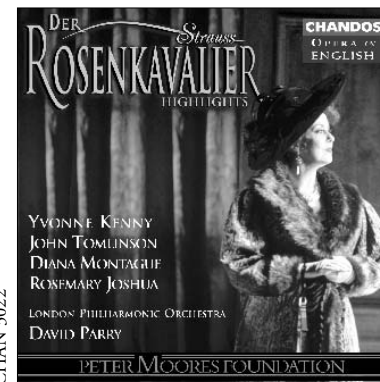
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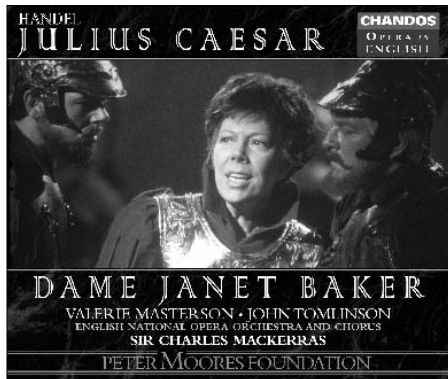
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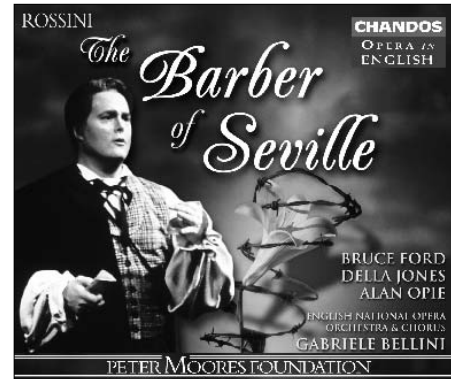
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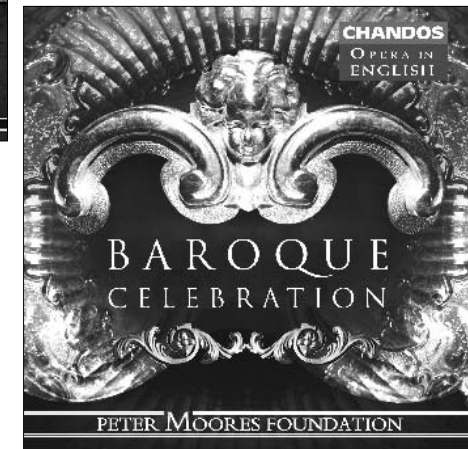


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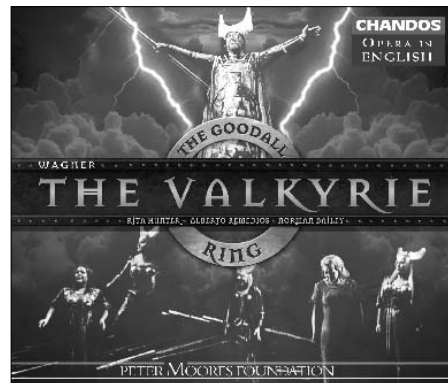
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Opera in English on Chandos



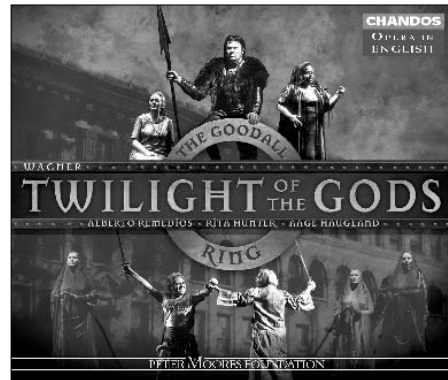
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CHAN 3038(4)



CHAN 3045(4)



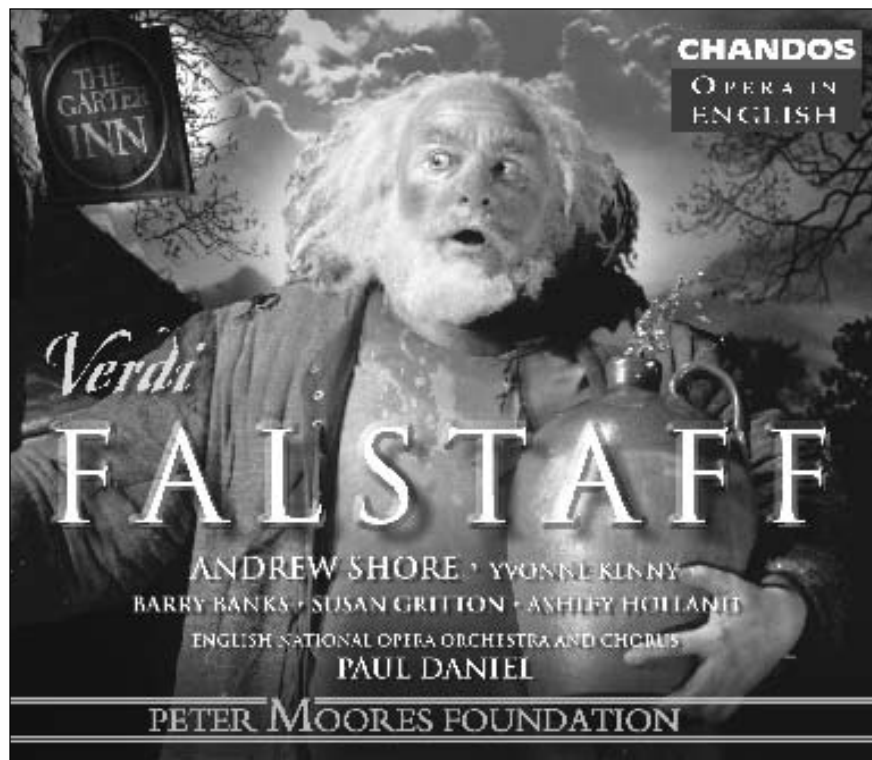
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Recording producer Ronald Kinloch Anderson

Sound engineer Neville Boyling

Dialogue production Wendy Toye

Recording venue No. 1 Studio, Abbey Road, London; 6–15 October & 22 December 1967

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MOZART: THE ABDUCTION FROM THE SERAGLIO



CHANDOS DIGITAL 2-disc set **CHAN 3081(2)**

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

The Phoenix Opera production of

The Abduction from the Seraglio

Comic opera in three acts

Libretto by G. Stephanie from a play by C.F. Bretzner

Texts of musical numbers translated by Joan Cross and Anne Wood

English dialogue translated and adapted by Hugh Mills

Pasha Selim	David Kelsey <i>speaking part</i>
Constanza, a Spanish lady, betrothed to Belmonte	Mattiwilda Dobbs <i>soprano</i>
Blonda, her English maid	Jenifer Eddy <i>soprano</i>
Belmonte, a Spanish nobleman	Nicolai Gedda <i>tenor</i>
Pedrillo, former servant to Belmonte, now gardener to the Pasha	John Fryatt <i>tenor</i>
Osmin, Pasha Selim's steward	Noel Mangin <i>bass</i>

Ambrosian Singers
The Bath Festival Orchestra
Yehudi Menuhin

COMPACT DISC ONE
58:37

ADD

COMPACT DISC TWO
74:47

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SOLOISTS/BATH FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA/MENUHIN