

CHAN 3099

GREAT OPERATIC ARIAS

CHANDOS

OPERA IN
ENGLISH



PETER MOORES FOUNDATION



Russell Duncan

Session photo: Yvonne Kenny

**Great
Operatic
Arias**
with
Yvonne Kenny

	Time	Page
George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)		
<i>from Rinaldo</i>		
Armida's Aria (Ah! crudel)		
[1] 'Ah! Cruel man'	5:22	[p. 46]
with Eligio Quinteiro theorbo and Catherine Edwards harpsichord		
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)		
<i>from The Marriage of Figaro</i>		
Letter Duet (Che soave zefiretto)		
[2] 'Well, what did you tell him?' – 'How delightful 'tis to wander'	3:33	[p. 46]
with Rebecca Evans soprano		
<i>from Così fan tutte (All Women are like That)</i>		
Fiordiligi's Recitative and Rondo (Per pietà)		
[3] 'He's left me...' – 'Ah, forgive, my love, forgive me'	8:47	[p. 47]
Richard Strauss (1864–1949)		
<i>from Arabella</i>		
Arabella and Zdenka's Duet (Aber der richtige)		
[4] 'He's not the one who is right for me'	6:36	[p. 48]
with Rebecca Evans soprano		

	Time	Page
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart		
<i>from Così fan tutte</i>		
Fiordiligi and Ferrando's Duet (Fra gli amplessi)		
[5] 'By tomorrow we'll be together'	6:17	[p. 48]
with Bruce Ford tenor		
Franz Lehár (1870–1948)		
<i>from The Merry Widow</i>		
Vilia Song		
[6] 'A Vilia who liv'd by a cool forest glade'	5:32	[p. 50]
with Geoffrey Mitchell Choir , James A. Ellis arranger/mandolin and Nigel Woodhouse mandolin		
Emmerich Kálmán (1882–1953)		
<i>from The Gypsy Princess</i>		
Sylva and Edwin's Duet (Weiß du es nicht?)		
[7] 'Festive laughter, celebration' – 'Where are they now?'	6:37	[p. 50]
with Bruce Ford tenor		
Richard Strauss		
<i>from Capriccio</i>		
Closing Scene		
[8] 'Where is my brother?'	21:58	[p. 52]
with Roderick Williams baritone and Timothy Jones horn		

George Gershwin (1898–1937)

from The Show Is On
‘By Strauss’

9 ‘Away with the music of Broadway!’

Time Page

2:39 [p. 54]

Ivor Novello (1893–1951)

from King’s Rhapsody

Princess Cristiane’s Song

10 ‘Some day my heart will awake’

2:47 [p. 54]

TT 70:14

Yvonne Kenny soprano

London Symphony Orchestra

Clio Gould leader

Martin Fitzpatrick assistant conductor

Richard Hickox



Kiran Chang

Yvonne Kenny as the Countess in
Opera Australia’s production of
Strauss’s *Capriccio*

Great Operatic Arias

The fortunes of Handel's dramatic works underwent a remarkable revival in the second half of the twentieth century. Never to be forgotten is the pioneering work of the Handel Opera Society, Kent Opera, and the Unicorn Theatre at Abingdon. This was followed in the 1980s and 1990s by stagings of his operas and oratorios at English National Opera, at Covent Garden and at Glyndebourne, several of which saw Yvonne Kenny in a starring role.

Opening with a run of fifteen performances in early 1711, *Rinaldo* was the first Italian opera to be written expressly for the London stage. Performed at the Queen's Theatre, Haymarket (roughly on the site of Her Majesty's Theatre), it is set at the time of the First Crusade, which culminated in the capture of Jerusalem in 1099. Armida, sorceress and Queen of Damascus, is in love with Rinaldo, one of the Christian knights. She assumes the form of his betrothed, but fails to seduce him. After his rapid departure, she veers from pleading to threatening and back again in 'Ah! Cruel man' (track [1]). Oboe and bassoon eloquently underscore her passion.

Lorenzo da Ponte was a rakish figure who was employed as poet to the court theatre in Vienna. Dismissed in the year of Mozart's death, he later found a position as poet to the new King's Theatre, Haymarket (the theatre that Handel knew having burned down). He fled to the United States to escape his creditors and became a grocer, a bookseller, and Professor of Italian Literature at Columbia College, dying in New York at the age of eighty-nine.

The Marriage of Figaro (1786) was the first of da Ponte's collaborations with Mozart, the others being *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte*. It was based on the play by Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, who wrote it as a sequel to *The Barber of Seville*. Beaumarchais, a character as colourful as da Ponte, had got into trouble in Paris for his depictions of the lower orders outwitting their aristocratic masters. *The Barber* had been performed in Vienna in the setting by Paisiello, which remained a repertory work until it was blown out of the water by Rossini, but *Figaro*, as a play, was banned. However, as a contemporary reviewer wrote, slightly misquoting

Beaumarchais' *Barber*, 'what cannot be spoken nowadays will be sung', and Mozart's *Figaro* went ahead, though da Ponte did tone down some of the more subversive elements.

Countess Almaviva and her maid, Susanna, are planning to put a stop to the Count's amorous pursuits by means of a trick. Almaviva is to meet Susanna in the garden that night; but the rendezvous will be kept by his own wife. In 'How delightful 'tis to wander' (track [2]), Susanna writes to the erring husband at the Countess's dictation. The voices alternate, then combine in sensuous thirds, with a commentary provided, as in *Rinaldo*, by oboe and bassoon.

Così fan tutte (1790) means 'All women behave like that' (da Ponte preferred his alternative title, which in English is the more elegant 'The school for lovers'). Don Alfonso, a cynical old bachelor, bets his two young friends that, provided they obey his orders to the letter, he can make each of their girlfriends transfer her affections to the other man. The setting is Naples, but the girls are from Ferrara: da Ponte's little joke, as one of the singers, known as La Ferrarese, was his mistress.

The young men leave their sweethearts, pretending to be called away on military

service, and return disguised as Albanians. The maid, who has been bribed by Alfonso but doesn't recognise the men, encourages her employers to look favourably on the new suitors. The first to succumb is Dorabella; Fiordiligi, the part written for Adriana Ferrarese, is made of sterner stuff, and in 'He's left me... Ah, forgive, my love' (track [3]) she reproaches herself for being tempted, and begs her absent lover for forgiveness. The aria is notable for its prominent horn parts: Beethoven disapproved of the opera's moral tone but was happy enough to follow suit when composing Leonore's great soliloquy in *Fidelio*.

Shortly afterwards, Fiordiligi vows to follow the officers onto the field of battle, taking Dorabella with her. They will kit themselves out in their lovers' spare uniforms. (What were uniforms doing in the girls' house, one wonders?) 'By tomorrow we'll be together' (track [4]), she sings; but she is overheard by Ferrando, whose blandishments she was earlier trying to resist, and soon they are in each other's arms. All is resolved by the men re-entering as their old selves. Don Alfonso has won his bet and the original partnerships are resumed, each of the four young people now sadder and wiser.

‘The Mozart of the Champs-Élysées’ was Rossini’s assessment of Offenbach, whose operettas were all the rage in Paris during the 1850s and 1860s. They were popular in Vienna, too, which led to the creation of home-grown products by Suppé, Millöcker and, especially, Johann Strauss the younger. By the end of the century their star was waning, but Viennese operetta received a shot in the arm with the advent of Franz Lehár and Emmerich Kálmán. In an amusing parallel with Offenbach, who was no Frenchman, neither composer was from Austria: both were born in Hungary, Kálmán to Hungarian parents, Lehár to a Hungarian mother.

Many of Lehár’s later works, including *The Tsarevitch* and *The Land of Smiles*, were written as vehicles for the tenor Richard Tauber, and first performed in Berlin. The composer’s greatest success, however, pre-dates the Tauber era and was premiered in Vienna in 1905. This was **The Merry Widow**, of which the story, like that of many Viennese operettas including Strauss’s masterpiece *Die Fledermaus*, was based on a French original. Indeed it is set in Paris, where Baron Mirko Zeta, the envoy of the small and impoverished state of Pontevedro (Montenegro, in other words), is anxious that the huge fortune of the recently-

widowed Hanna Glawari should not be lost to his country.

It is essential, therefore, that Hanna should marry someone from Pontevedro; and the Baron’s candidate is Count Danilo Danilovitch, the secretary to the Pontevedrin legation. Danilo, a former lover of Hanna’s, affects to prefer the company of the girls from Maxim’s; but eventually he admits his love for Hanna, and all ends happily. ‘A Vilia who liv’d by a cool forest glade’ (track 8), about a wood-nymph who abandons a young man after a night of love, is sung by Hanna at a party in the garden of her house.

Leo Stein, one of the two collaborators on the libretto of *The Merry Widow*, performed the same task for **The Gypsy Princess**; it opened in 1915, ten years after *The Merry Widow*, and featured the same leading lady, Mizzi Günther. Kálmán’s operetta career began with *The Gay Hussars* (called *Autumn Manoeuvres* when it reached London), premiered in Budapest. *The Gypsy Princess* was followed by many further successes, including *Countess Mariza* in 1924 and *The Circus Princess* two years later. A production of *The Empress Josephine*, first performed in Zürich in 1936, was planned for the Vienna State Opera with Richard Tauber and Jarmila Novotná,

who had starred there in Lehár’s last work, *Giuditta*; but on the arrival of the Nazis Kálmán fled via Paris and London to the USA and the staging never took place.

The Gypsy Princess turns on the love between Sylva Varescu and Edwin, the son of Prince von und zu Lippert-Weylersheim. The Prince is resolutely opposed to his son’s marrying Sylva, a mere cabaret singer, but finally relents when it is revealed that his own wife, a widowed countess when he married her, had herself been a singer. In the middle act, which takes place at the Lippert-Weylersheim palace in Vienna, Edwin and Sylva are each partnered by someone else. ‘Where are they now?’ (track 7) is a waltz in which they look back on their past happiness.

It might seem a long way from Viennese operetta, with its froth and glitter, to the rather more serious dramas of Richard Strauss, but in fact the two worlds are closely connected. In *Der Rosenkavalier* (*The Knight of the Rose*), which is set in eighteenth-century Vienna, Strauss adopted the idiom of his namesake (but no relation), producing a string of anachronistic but brilliant waltzes. *Der Rosenkavalier* was the first libretto that the Viennese poet and playwright Hugo von Hofmannsthal wrote for Strauss, their first

actual collaboration being over an adaptation of his stage play, *Elektra*. **Arabella** (1933) was the last, but Hofmannsthal never saw the result: he died suddenly in 1929, leaving Acts II and III in draft, and without having read the congratulatory telegram that Strauss had sent him on receiving the final version of Act I.

Arabella is also set in Vienna – in the 1860s, this time – and Strauss again features the waltz. The opera has suffered from being unfavourably compared with *Der Rosenkavalier*: if it lacks the bitter-sweet attraction of the earlier work, it is nonetheless treasurable for Strauss’s sensuous writing for his favourite voice, the soprano. An impoverished aristocrat, Count Waldner, is living with his wife and two daughters, Arabella and Zdenka, in a hotel. To save on the expense of launching two girls into society, Zdenka is forced to dress as a boy. As such she is the confidant(e) of Matteo, a young officer in love with Arabella who cannot understand why Arabella is so cool in person when she writes him such passionate letters. He doesn’t realise, naturally, that the letters have been forged by Zdenka, who herself is in love with him.

In ‘He’s not the one who is right for me’ (track 4), Arabella explains her feelings to

Zdenka. For the passage beginning ‘The one who’s right for me’, Strauss adapts a South Slav folksong, one of three in the opera that he found in a nineteenth-century collection. After Zdenka’s response the tune returns, this time with the younger sister soaring above it in a glorious descant.

Arabella does end up with ‘Mr Right’: Mandryka, a landowner from Croatia. The fate of the Countess in *Capriccio* (1942) is much less certain since, as her servants put it, she ‘is in love and doesn’t know with whom’. Strauss’s last opera, premiered in wartime Munich, is a conversation piece on an old and complex subject, the relative importance in opera of the music and the words. Far from being an arid discussion, though, the story takes wing through the respective arts being personified by Flamand, a composer, and Olivier, a poet, who both love the Countess.

She promises to make known her decision between them at 11 o’clock next morning. But in the last scene (track [9]), as she sings to herself the sonnet written by Olivier and set to music by Flamand, the question – of love, as of aesthetics – remains undecided. Perhaps the answer lies in the orchestra, where the solo horn plays a rapturous introduction and also has the last word.

King’s Rhapsody, a ‘musical romance’, was first produced in August 1949, a fortnight before Strauss’s death. It was one of the last of the plays with music by Ivor Novello, with lyrics by Christopher Hassall, of which the best known is probably *The Dancing Years*. Novello took the male lead in his musical plays, and indeed had been appearing in *King’s Rhapsody* at the time of his death.

The story is set in two imaginary kingdoms (with one scene at the Paris Opéra, where the young Caruso – who ‘should do well’ – is singing in *Faust*). Princess Cristiane of Norseland is unmarried: Sweden and Denmark have grabbed all the eligible princes, and she hasn’t met anyone with whom she could fall in love. Moreover, she is known as the Snow Princess. Her heart may be cold, she says, or ‘it may be just asleep’, at which point she sings ‘Some day my heart will awake’ (track [10]). She subsequently marries Nikki, the formerly exiled prince of the Balkan kingdom of Murania who has now ascended the throne, but political events drive them apart. Nikki abdicates and returns to exile. The song is heard again at the end, as their infant son is crowned king.

‘Some day my heart will awake’ is a waltz; and so, of course, is ‘By Strauss’ (track [9]).

This was written by the Gershwin brothers for *The Show Is On*, a Broadway revue by many different hands that opened in December 1936. However, its fame dates from long after George Gershwin’s death, when it was included in *An American in Paris*. Released in October 1951, the film marked the screen début of Leslie Caron, but it was not she who sang this affectionate parody; instead, it was performed by Georges Guetary and the other male leads, Gene Kelly and Oscar Levant. The humorously derogatory reference to Gershwin and his fellow composers didn’t appear in the film, perhaps because Irving Berlin and Cole Porter were still alive. It would be nice to think that Porter had the original version in mind when he came to write ‘Wunderbar’, one of the hit numbers in *Kiss me, Kate*.

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Yvonne Kenny was born in Australia and is one of the most distinguished sopranos of her generation. She made her operatic debut in London as Donizetti’s *Rosmonda d’Inghilterra*. After winning the Kathleen Ferrier Competition she joined the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, where her roles have included Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Ilia



(*Idomeneo*), Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Adina (*L’elisir d’amore*), Liù (*Turandot*), Aspasia (*Mitridate*) and Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*).

She has won international renown in the great Handel roles, notably Semele and Alcina (Covent Garden and La Fenice, Venice), Romilda (*Xerxes*) for English National Opera and the Bavarian State Opera, and both Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*) and Armida (*Rinaldo*) in Sydney. She has also sung at the San Francisco Opera, the Vienna State Opera, La Scala Milan, the Berlin Staatsoper, the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, Paris Opéra, in Hamburg, Zurich, Washington and Glyndebourne, and she returns frequently to her native Australia where she has sung many roles. She was made a Member of the Order of Australia for Services to Music in 1989.

Yvonne Kenny’s many recordings include *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Elgar’s *The Kingdom*, Britten’s

The Beggar's Opera and *Gloriana*, Handel's *Deborah*, Dyson's *The Canterbury Pilgrims* (for Chandos), highlights from *Der Rosenkavalier* and a disc of Great Operatic Arias (for Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation), and for Opera Rara Donizetti's *Emilia di Liverpool*, *L'eremitaggio di Liverpool*, and *Ugo, Conte di Parigi*, and Meyerbeer's *Il crociato in Egitto*.

Greg Barrett



Internationally regarded as one of Britain's most respected and versatile conductors, **Richard Hickox** CBE, currently Principal Conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, has recently been

appointed Music Director of Opera Australia, based at the Sydney Opera House, from January 2005. His other positions include Associate Guest Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra, Music Director of the City of London Sinfonia, former Artistic

Director and now Conductor Emeritus of the Northern Sinfonia, and Co-Director of the period instrument group Collegium Musicum 90 since its formation in 1990.

Winner of the *Gramophone* Record of the Year and best Orchestral disc of 2001 (as well as a *Brit* Award) for his recording with the London Symphony Orchestra of the original version of Vaughan Williams's Symphony No. 2, he has received many other awards, including a *Grammy* for *Peter Grimes* and a further three *Gramophone* Awards. Committed to a wide repertoire, he has regularly conducted the major UK orchestras and appeared at festivals such as Aldeburgh, Bath, Cheltenham and the BBC Proms, and he has conducted many of the leading orchestras in Europe, Japan and North America. Opera is a major part of his activities and he has made guest appearances at the Vienna State Opera, English National Opera, the Spoleto Festival in Italy (where he was Music Director for five years), and in venues in Sydney, Washington and Los Angeles. He has been elected an Honorary Fellow of Queens' College Cambridge, awarded a Doctorate of Music at Durham University in 2003 and made a CBE in the Queen's Jubilee Honours List in 2002 for services to British music.

His exclusive association with Chandos, for whom he has already made over 150 recordings, will continue well into the future with the completion of his series of Britten operas with the City of London Sinfonia, the continuation of his acclaimed cycle of Vaughan

Williams symphonies with the London Symphony Orchestra, complete cycles of the music of Frank Bridge and of Michael and Sir Lennox Berkeley with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and Masses by Hummel and Schubert with Collegium Musicum 90.

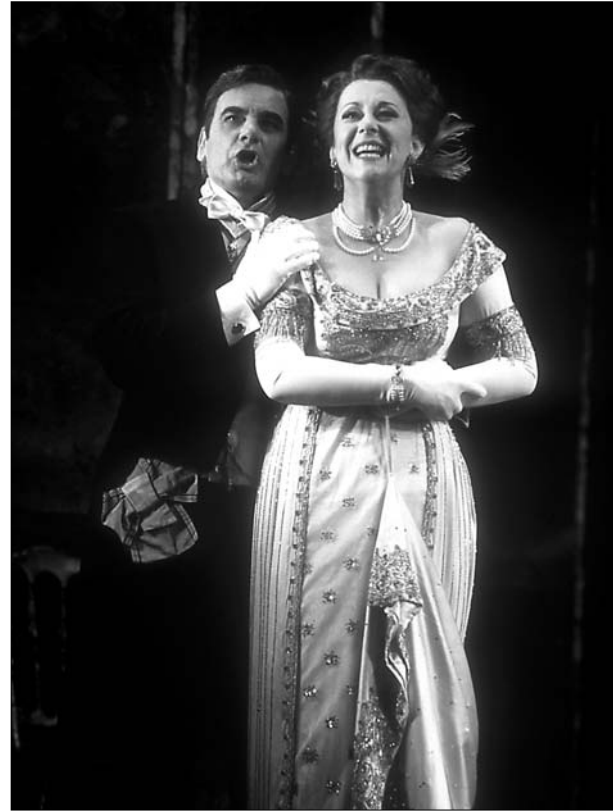
Branco Gaica



Yvonne Kenny as Armida in
Opera Australia's production of
Handel's *Rinaldo*

16

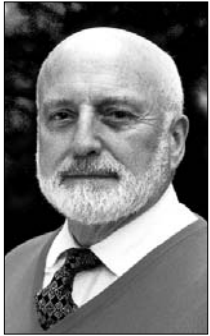
Branco Gaica



Anson Austin as Edwin and
Yvonne Kenny as Sylva in Opera
Australia's production of
Kálmán's *The Gypsy Princess*

17

Bill Cooper/PMF



SIR PETER MOORES, CBE, DL

Sir Peter Moores was born in Lancashire and educated at Eton College and Christ Church, Oxford, where he studied Italian and German. He had a 'gap year' at Glyndebourne working as a behind-the-scenes administrator before going to Oxford, then studied for three years at the Vienna Academy of Music, where he produced the Austrian premiere of Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* and was a production assistant with the Vienna State Opera working as assistant producer of performances by Viennese artists at the San Carlo Opera House, Naples, at the Geneva Festival and at the Rome Opera.

In 1957 he joined his father's business, Littlewoods, becoming Vice-Chairman in 1976, Chairman from 1977 to 1980 and remaining a director until 1993. His public appointments include from 1981 to 1983 Governor of the BBC, Trustee of the Tate Gallery from 1978 to 1985 and from 1988 to 1992 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 1992 he was appointed Deputy Lieutenant (DL) of Lancashire by HM Queen Elizabeth II. He was appointed a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in 1991 and received a Knighthood in the New Year's Honours List for 2003 in recognition of his charitable services to the arts.

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

Peter Moores' philanthropic work began with his passion for opera: in his twenties he identified and helped a number of young artists in the crucial, early stages of their careers, several of whom – Dame Joan Sutherland, Sir Colin Davis and the late Sir Geraint Evans amongst them – became world-famous. He set up his eponymous Foundation in 1964 when he was thirty-two, in order to develop his charitable aims, not only in music and the visual arts, but also in education, health,

youth, social and environmental projects. To date, because of his initiatives and life-long commitment to these causes, he has disbursed more than £85 million of his own money through the Foundation and the Peter Moores Charitable Trust – 'to get things done and to open doors'.

Projects to help the young have ranged from a scheme to encourage young Afro-Caribbeans to stay on at school to the endowment of a Faculty Directorship and Chair of Management Studies at Oxford University (providing the lead donation in 1991 for the new School of Management Studies). In 1994 a permanent Transatlantic Slave Trade Gallery, initiated by Peter Moores, opened at the Merseyside Maritime Museum, with the aim of fostering discussion about the heritage and true history of the slave trade. Substantial help was given to the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Development Trust, whilst through annual PMF Scholarships established in 1971 well over two hundred young singers have received practical support at the outset of their careers, enabling a significant number to become international opera stars.

In 1993 the Foundation acquired Compton Verney, an eighteenth-century mansion, and established the Compton Verney House Trust, an independent charity which it funded in order to transform the mansion into an art gallery designed especially to encourage newcomers to the visual arts. Alongside major international touring exhibitions, it will house permanent collections of North European art, Neapolitan paintings and one of the finest collections of archaic oriental bronzes in the UK, as well as a British Portrait Collection and a British Folk Art Collection. The gallery is scheduled to open in Spring 2004.

Opera has given the Foundation its most public 'face'. Since Peter Moores initiated the live recording of the 'Goodall *Ring*' at the London Coliseum in the 1970s, the Foundation has enabled some eighty recordings to be produced: Chandos Records' Opera in English series – 'Opera that speaks your language' – is now the largest recorded collection of operas sung in English whilst Opera Rara's recordings of rare *bel canto* operas have opened up an immensely rich repertory previously only accessible to scholars. In live performance, the Foundation has encouraged the creation of new work and schemes to attract new audiences, financing the publication of scores and enabling rarely heard works to be staged by British opera companies and festivals.

Große Opernarien

Die dramatischen Werke Händels erfuhren in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts eine bemerkenswerte Renaissance. Nie zu vergessende Pionierarbeit leisteten dabei in England die Handel Opera Society, die Kent Opera und das Unicorn Theatre in Abingdon. In den achtziger und neunziger Jahren folgten die English National Opera, die Royal Opera Covent Garden und die Glyndebourne Festival Opera mit Opern- und Oratoriumsinszenierungen, in denen oft Yvonne Kenny eine Hauptrolle spielte.

Anfang 1711 debütierte *Rinaldo* als erste eigens für London komponierte italienische Oper und bestätigte das Konzept mit fünfzehn Aufführungen bis zum Ende der Spielzeit am Queen's Theatre, Haymarket (etwa dort, wo heute Her Majesty's Theatre steht). Die Handlung spielt zur Zeit des Ersten Kreuzzugs, der 1099 in der Eroberung Jerusalems gipfelte. Armida, Zauberin und Königin von Damaskus, hat ihr Auge auf Rinaldo, einen der Kreuzritter, geworfen. Sie nimmt die Gestalt seiner geliebten Almirena an, kann ihn aber dennoch nicht verführen. Nach seinem raschen Abgang wird sie in "Ah!

Cruel man" (Band [1]) zwischen Liebe und Hass hin und her gerissen. Oboe und Fagott untermalen eloquent ihre Leidenschaft.

Lorenzo da Ponte war ein italienischer Lebemann, der als Librettist am Wiener Hoftheater beschäftigt war. Nach seiner Entlassung im Todesjahr Mozarts fand er eine Anstellung am King's Theatre, Haymarket (das Theater, das Händel gekannt hatte, war niedergebrannt). Später floh er vor seinen Gläubigern nach Amerika, wo er sich zunächst als Krämer und Buchhändler durchschlug, bevor er Professor für italienische Literatur am Columbia College wurde. Er starb mit 89 Jahren in New York.

The Marriage of Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*, 1786) war das erste Ergebnis von da Pontes Zusammenarbeit mit Mozart, dem *Don Giovanni* und *Così fan tutte* folgen sollten. Das Werk basierte auf einer Komödie von Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, die er als Fortsetzung zu *The Barber of Seville* verfasst hatte. Beaumarchais, eine nicht minder schillernde Gestalt als da Ponte, hatte in Paris Schwierigkeiten bekommen, weil er neben anderen gesellschaftskritischen Ansätzen

den Adel durch den dritten Stand überlisten ließ. *The Barber of Seville* erreichte Wien in der Vertonung von Paisiello und hatte dort als populäres Repertoirestück nachhaltigen Erfolg, bis es von der Rossini-Oper verdrängt wurde, doch *Figaro* war als Schauspiel verboten. Wie allerdings ein zeitgenössischer Kritiker unter Anlehnung an die Worte von Beaumarchais' *Barber* bemerkte: "Was man nicht sagen darf, wird heutzutage gesungen." So setzte sich Mozarts *Figaro* durch, nachdem da Ponte einige der subversiveren Elemente abgeschwächt hatte.

Die Gräfin Almaviva und ihr Kammermädchen Susanna wollen die amourösen Pläne des Grafen vereiteln. Almaviva soll sich mit Susanna im Garten verabreden, doch zum Stelldichein wird in Verkleidung die Gräfin selbst erscheinen. In "How delightful 'tis to wander" (Band [2]) lässt sich Susanna von der Gräfin einen Brief an den treulosen Gatten diktieren. Die Stimmen wechseln sich ab und verschmelzen dann in sinnlichen Terzen, während Oboe und Fagott wie in *Rinaldo* ihren Kommentar dazu geben.

Così fan tutte (1790) – zu deutsch: "So machen's alle" – war nicht da Pontes erste Wahl für den Titel; er selbst bevorzugte *La*

scuola degli amanti ("Die Schule der Liebenden"), was übrigens auch im Englischen als "The school for lovers" eleganter klingt als "All women behave like that". Don Alfonso, ein zynischer alter Junggeselle, bietet zwei jungen Freunden eine Wette an: Wenn sich die beiden Offiziere genau an seine Weisungen halten, wird er ihre Verlobten (zwei Schwestern) dazu bringen, sich jeweils dem anderen zuzuwenden. Der Schauplatz ist Neapel, doch die Frauen stammen aus Ferrara – ein kleiner Scherz da Pontes, denn eine der Sängerinnen, seine eigene Geliebte, war als "La Ferrarese" bekannt.

Die jungen Männer verabschieden sich von ihren Verlobten, weil sie angeblich zu den Waffen gerufen werden, und treten wenig später als Albanier verkleidet wieder auf. Das Kammermädchen, das zwar von Alfonso bestochen worden ist, aber die Männer nicht erkennt, ermutigt die Herrinnen zu mehr Freizügigkeit in ihrem Liebesleben. Dorabella wird als erste schwach. Fiordiligi, die von Adriana Ferrarese verkörperte Schwester, ist standhafter; aber in "He's left me ... Ah, forgive, my love" (Band [3]) macht sie sich dennoch Vorwürfe, und sie bittet den abwesenden Verlobten um Vergebung für ihren Wankelmut. Die Arie zeichnet sich

durch ihre prominenten Hornstimmen aus: Beethoven lehnte zwar die lockere Moral der Oper ab, bediente sich aber gerne musikalisch, als er Leonores großartigen Monolog für *Fidelio* schrieb.

Wenig später gelobt Fiordiligi, gemeinsam mit Dorabella den Offizieren an die Front zu folgen. Sie werden sich in die Ersatzuniformen der Männer kleiden. (Was hatten wohl die Uniformen im Haus der tugendhaften Schwestern zu suchen?) “By tomorrow we’ll be together” (Band 5), singt sie; aber sie wird von Ferrando belauscht, dessen Schmeicheleien sie vorher kaum widerstehen konnte, und bald liegen sich die beiden in den Armen. Mit der Rückkehr der beiden Offiziere in eigener Gestalt findet die Geschichte ein Ende. Don Alfonso hat seine Wette gewonnen. Die Paare sind wieder vereint, und alle vier Betroffenen haben hinzugelernt.

Als “Mozart der Champs-Élysées” bezeichnete Rossini den Operettenkomponisten Offenbach, dessen Werke nach Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts in Paris der letzte Schrei waren. Die neue Gattung kam auch in Wien gut an, wo sie von Suppé, Millöcker und insbesondere von Johann Strauß (Sohn) aufgegriffen wurde. Gegen Ende des Jahrhunderts verblasste der Stern Offenbachs,

doch die Wiener Operette erlebte unter Franz Lehár und Emmerich Kálmán eine neue Blüte. Ironischerweise entstammten diese beiden – so wie Offenbach als Deutscher in Frankreich reüssierte – als gebürtige Ungarn eigentlich einem anderen Kulturkreis.

Viele der späteren Werke Lehárs, wie *Der Zarewitsch* (*The Tsarevitch*) und *Das Land des Lächelns* (*The Land of Smiles*), wurden für den Tenor Richard Tauber komponiert und in Berlin uraufgeführt. Der größte Erfolg des Komponisten stammte jedoch noch aus der Vorkriegszeit und kam in Wien zur Uraufführung. Gemeint ist **The Merry Widow** (*Die lustige Witwe*) (1905), die wie so viele Wiener Operetten, auch das Strauß-Meisterwerk *Die Fledermaus*, auf einer französischen Vorlage beruhte. Der Schauplatz ist tatsächlich Paris, wo Baron Mirko Zeta, der Gesandte des verarmten Kleinstaates Pontevedro (sprich: Montenegro) ängstlich darum bemüht ist, das Riesenvermögen der unlängst verwitweten Hanna Glawari für sein Land nicht zu verlieren.

Am besten wäre es, wenn Hanna einen Mann aus Pontevedro heiraten würde, und dazu hat der Baron den Grafen Danilo Danilowitsch auserlesen, den Sekretär seiner Gesandtschaft. Danilo war bereits einmal mit

Hanna liiert und gibt nun vor, die Gesellschaft der jungen Damen aus dem Maxim vorzuziehen; am Ende gesteht er aber seine Liebe zu Hanna ein, und alle sind glücklich. “A Vilia who liv’d by a cool forest glade” (Band 6), erzählt die Geschichte von einer Waldnymphe, die ihren sterblichen Geliebten am Ende der Nacht verlässt, und wird von Hanna bei einem Fest im Garten ihres Hauses gesungen.

Obwohl zwischen den Uraufführungen der *Lustigen Witwe* und der **The Gypsy Princess** (*Czárdásfürstin*) (1915) ganze zehn Jahre lagen, war in ihnen die Tradition stark: So war nicht nur Leo Stein erneut für das Libretto mitverantwortlich, sondern Mizzi Günther spielte auch wieder die Hauptrolle. Kálmáns Karriere als Operettenkomponist hatte mit *Tatárjárás* in Budapest begonnen, bevor diese ungarische Komödie ihren Siegeszug in Wien (*Ein Herbstmanöver*), New York (*The Gay Hussars*) und London (*Autumn Manoeuvres*) fortsetzte. An die *Gypsy Princess* schlossen sich viele weitere Erfolge an, darunter *Gräfin Mariza* 1924 und *Die Zirkusprinzessin* 1926. *Kaiserin Josephine* kam 1936 in Zürich heraus, doch eine mit Richard Tauber (dem Star von *Giuditta*, Lehárs letztem Werk) und Jarmila Novotná für die Wiener Staatsoper geplante

Inszenierung wurde durch den Anschluss verhindert. Kálmán emigrierte über Paris und London nach Amerika.

The Gypsy Princess handelt von der Liebe zwischen Sylva Varescu und Edwin, dem Sohn des Fürsten von und zu Lippert-Weylersheim. Der Fürst widersetzt sich der unstandesgemäßen Ehe seines Stammhalters mit der Chansonette, gibt aber schließlich nach, als sich herausstellt, dass seine eigene Gattin eine Primadonna gewesen war, bevor er sie als verwitwete Gräfin kennenlernte und heiratete. Im mittleren Akt, der im Palais Lippert-Weylersheim in Wien spielt, sind Edwin und Sylva anderen Partnern zugeordnet. “Where are they now?” (Band 7) ist ein Walzer, in dem sich die beiden an ihre glückliche Vergangenheit erinnern.

Zwischen der Wiener Operette mit ihrem Schaum und Glitter und den Musikdramen von Richard Strauss scheinen Welten zu liegen, doch in Wirklichkeit sind sie eng miteinander verwandt. *Der Rosenkavalier* spielt im Wien des 18. Jahrhunderts, inspiriert sich aber immer wieder auf glänzende, wenn auch anachronistische Weise am Wiener Walzer. Dies war das erste Libretto, das der Wiener Dichter und Dramatiker Hugo von Hofmannsthal eigens für Strauss schrieb,

nachdem er zuvor bereits sein Schauspiel *Elektra* für den Komponisten bearbeitet hatte. **Arabella** (1933), das letzte Produkt dieser Zusammenarbeit, war ein Bühnenerlebnis, das Hofmannsthal selbst versagt blieb: Als er 1929 einem Schlaganfall erlag, hinterließ er den zweiten und dritten Akt im Entwurf und konnte nicht einmal mehr das Danktelegramm lesen, das ihm Strauss für die endgültige Fassung des ersten Aktes geschickt hatte.

Arabella spielt ebenfalls in Wien – diesmal um 1860 – und Strauss konzentriert sich wieder auf den Walzer. Neben dem *Rosenkavalier* ist diese Oper oft stiefmütterlich behandelt worden, doch selbst wenn man vielleicht das Bittersüße an ihr vermisst, besticht sie mit ihrer sinnlichen Musik für die Lieblingsstimme des Komponisten, den Sopran. Graf Waldner, ein verarmter Aristokrat, lebt mit seiner Frau und den Töchtern Arabella und Zdenka in einem Hotel. Da die Finanzlage der Familie es nicht erlaubt, beide Töchter standesgemäß auszuführen, wird Zdenka als Junge aufgezogen. In dieser Verkleidung schüttet ihr Matteo, ein Verehrer Arabellas, sein Herz aus. Der junge Offizier kann nicht verstehen, warum Arabella ihm die kalte Schulter zeigt, obwohl sie ihm doch leidenschaftliche Briefe

schreibt. Er ahnt natürlich nicht, dass die Briefe eigentlich von Zdenka stammen, die ihn selbst liebt.

In “He’s not the one who is right for me” (Band 4), erklärt Arabella der Schwester ihre Gefühle. Bei der Passage, die mit “The one who’s right for me” beginnt, lehnt sich Strauss an eine südslawische Volksweise an – eines von drei Liedern, die er in einer Sammlung aus dem 19. Jahrhundert fand und in diese Oper aufnahm. Nach der Antwort Zdenkas kehrt die Melodie zurück, diesmal begleitet von einem wunderschönen Diskant der jüngeren Schwester.

Arabella bekommt am Ende “den Richtigen”: Mandryka, einen reichen Gutsbesitzer aus Slawonien. Das Schicksal der Gräfin in *Capriccio* (1942) ist weniger gewiss, denn – so die Diener – sie ist verliebt und weiß nicht in wen. Mit seiner letzten, während des Krieges in München uraufgeführten Oper legte Strauss ein “Konservationsstück” über eine uralte und komplexe Frage vor: Wem gebührt in der Oper Vorrang, der Dichtung oder der Musik? Was als dröge Diskussion versanden könnte, gewinnt dramatische Gestalt dadurch, dass die beiden Künste durch zwei Verehrer der Gräfin, den Komponisten Flmand und den Poeten Olivier, verkörpert werden.

Sie verspricht für den nächsten Tag um elf Uhr mittags eine Entscheidung. Doch als sie für sich zum Schluss der Oper ein von Olivier verfasstes und von Flmand vertontes Sonett singt, bleibt die Frage der Liebe ebenso wie die der Ästhetik ungelöst. Vielleicht liegt die Antwort im Orchester, wo das Solohorn eine leidenschaftliche Einleitung spielt und auch das letzte Wort hat.

King’s Rhapsody, eine “musikalische Romanze”, wurde im August 1949 uraufgeführt, zwei Wochen vor dem Tod von Strauss. Es war eines der letzten Musicals aus der Feder Ivor Novellos, nach einem Text von Christopher Hassall, von denen man vielleicht *The Dancing Years* am besten kennt. Novello übernahm in seinen Musicals die männliche Hauptrolle und trat auch zum Zeitpunkt seines Todes in *King’s Rhapsody* auf.

Die Handlung spielt in zwei imaginären Königreichen (mit einer Szene an der Pariser Opéra, wo der junge Caruso – der es “weit bringen” dürfte – in *Faust* auftritt). Prinzessin Cristiane von Norseland ist noch nicht unter der Haube: Schweden und Dänemark haben alle heiratsfähigen Prinzen für sich vereinnahmt, und sie hat bisher niemanden gefunden, in den sie sich verlieben könnte. Überdies ist sie als Schneepinzessin bekannt.

Mag sein, dass sie ein Herz aus Eis hat, oder vielleicht schläft es nur, aber eines Tages – davon ist sie überzeugt – wird es erwachen (“Some day my heart will awake” (Band 10)). Sie heiratet schließlich Nikki, den zeitweilig verbannten Prinzen des Balkanreiches Murania, der inzwischen die Thronfolge angetreten hat, doch die politische Entwicklung treibt einen Keil zwischen die beiden. Nikki dankt ab und kehrt ins Exil zurück. Das Lied erklingt noch einmal am Ende, als ihr kleiner Sohn zum König gekrönt wird.

“Some day my heart will awake” ist ein Walzer, ebenso wie natürlich “By Strauss” (Band 9). Diese Gershwin-Nummer entstand für **The Show Is On**, eine Broadway-Revue mit Beiträgen vieler Komponisten, die im Dezember 1936 anlief, aber richtig berühmt wurde sie erst nach dem Tod George Gershwins durch den Film *Ein Amerikaner in Paris*, der im Oktober 1951 erschien und Leslie Caron ihre erste große Rolle gab. Es war allerdings nicht sie, die diese liebenswerte Parodie sang, sondern Georges Guétary mit den beiden anderen männlichen Hauptdarstellern, Gene Kelly und Oscar Levant. Der Film strich den humorvollen Seitenhieb auf Gershwin und seine

Komponistenkollegen, wohl weil Irving Berlin und Cole Porter noch lebten. Es ist ein schöner Gedanke, dass Porter die Originalfassung im Sinn gehabt haben könnte, als er "Wunderbar", eine der Erfolgsnummern aus *Kiss me, Kate*, schrieb.

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Übersetzung: Andreas Klatt

Die aus Australien stammende **Yvonne Kenny** zählt zu den renommiertesten Sopranistinnen ihrer Generation. Sie feierte ihr operistisches Debut in London als Donizettis *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*. Nachdem sie den Kathleen Ferrier Wettbewerb gewonnen hatte, kam sie an die Royal Opera Covent Garden, wo sie unter anderem die Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Ilia (*Idomeneo*), Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*), Liù (*Turandot*), Aspasia (*Mitridate*) und Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*) gesungen hat.

Internationalen Ruhm errang sie in den großen Händel-Rollen, vor allem Semele und Alcina (Covent Garden und La Fenice, Venedig), Romilda (*Xerxes*) für die English National Opera und die Bayrische Staatsoper, sowie Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*) und Armida (*Rinaldo*) in Sydney. Außerdem hat man sie an

der San Francisco Opera, Wiener Staatsoper, La Scala in Mailand, Berliner Staatsoper, Bayerischen Staatsoper und Pariser Opéra sowie in Hamburg, Zürich, Washington und Glyndebourne erlebt, und oft kehrt sie in ihre australische Heimat zurück, wo sie zahlreiche Rollen gesungen hat. 1989 wurde sie für ihre Verdienste um die Musik mit dem Order of Australia geehrt.

Zu den zahlreichen Aufnahmen Yvonne Kennys zählen *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Elgars *The Kingdom*, *The Beggar's Opera* und *Gloriana* von Britten, Händels *Deborah*, *The Canterbury Pilgrims* von Dyson (für Chandos), eine Auswahl aus *Der Rosenkavalier* und eine CD mit großen Opernarien (für Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation); für Opera Rara hat sie Donizettis *Emilia di Liverpool*, *L'eremitaggio di Liverpool* und *Ugo, Conte di Parigi* sowie *Il crociato in Egitto* von Meyerbeer aufgenommen.

Richard Hickox CBE gilt international als einer der angesehensten und vielseitigsten Dirigenten Großbritanniens. Er wirkt gegenwärtig als Chefdirigent des BBC National Orchestra of Wales und ist kürzlich zum Musikdirektor der Opera Australia

ernannt worden – eine Aufgabe, die er im Januar 2005 am Sydney Opera House übernehmen wird. Außerdem ist er Assoziierter Gastdirigent des London Symphony Orchestra, Musikdirektor der City of London Sinfonia sowie ehemaliger künstlerischer Leiter und nunmehr Emeritierter Dirigent der Northern Sinfonia; für die Leitung des auf zeitgenössischen Instrumenten musizierenden Collegium Musicum 90 ist er seit dessen Gründung 1990 mitverantwortlich.

Seine Einspielung der Originalfassung der Zweiten Sinfonie von Vaughan Williams mit dem London Symphony Orchestra erhielt 2001 als Schallplatte des Jahres und als beste Orchesteraufnahme zwei *Gramophone Awards* und wurde auch mit einem *Brit Award* ausgezeichnet. Neben vielen anderen Anerkennungen erhielt Richard Hickox einen *Grammy* für *Peter Grimes* und drei weitere *Gramophone Awards*. Mit seinem breit gefächerten Repertoire hat er alle namhaften britischen Orchester dirigiert; er nimmt regelmäßig an Festivals wie Aldeburgh, Bath, Cheltenham und den BBC Proms teil und ist auch mit vielen berühmten Orchestern in Europa, Japan und Nordamerika aufgetreten.

Die Oper spielt in seiner Tätigkeit eine wichtige Rolle. So hat man ihn an der Wiener Staatsoper, der English National Opera, bei den Festspielen von Spoleto in Italien (deren musikalische Leitung er fünf Jahre lang wahrnahm) sowie in Sydney, Washington und Los Angeles erlebt. Er ist vom Queens' College Cambridge zum Honorary Fellow gewählt, von der Universität Durham 2003 zum Ehrendoktor der Musik ernannt und für seinen Beitrag zum britischen Musikleben 2002 anlässlich der fünfzigsten Jahresfeier der Krönung Elizabeth II. mit dem Verdienstorden CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) ausgezeichnet worden.

Seine Schallplattenprojekte für Chandos – mehr als 150 Aufnahmen liegen aus dieser exklusiven Zusammenarbeit bereits vor – sehen den Abschluss einer Gesamtaufnahme der Britten-Opern mit der City of London Sinfonia, die Fortsetzung seines vielbeachteten Zyklus der Sinfonien von Vaughan Williams mit dem London Symphony Orchestra, Gesamteinspielungen der Musik von Frank Bridge und von Michael und Sir Lennox Berkeley mit dem BBC National Orchestra of Wales sowie Messen von Hummel und Schubert mit dem Collegium Musicum 90 vor.

Grands airs d'opéra

Les œuvres dramatiques de Haendel ont connu une remarquable résurrection dans la seconde moitié du XXe siècle. On n'oublie jamais le travail de pionniers effectué par la Handel Opera Society, par le Kent Opera et par l'Unicorn Theatre d'Abingdon. Leur succèdent, dans les années 1980 et 1990, des productions scéniques des opéras et des oratorios à l'English National Opera, à Covent Garden et à Glyndebourne, dont plusieurs avec Yvonne Kenny dans un des principaux rôles.

Rinaldo, qui ouvre début 1711 par une quinzaine de représentations, est le premier opéra italien à avoir été expressément écrit pour la scène londonienne. Joué au Queen's Theatre, Haymarket (plus ou moins à l'emplacement de Her Majesty's Theatre), il se déroule à l'époque de la première croisade, s'achevant par la conquête de Jérusalem en 1099. Armida, magicienne et reine de Damas, s'prend d'un des chevaliers chrétiens, Rinaldo. Elle revêt l'apparence de sa fiancée, mais ne parvient pas à le séduire. Après le départ précipité du héros, elle oscille entre la supplication et la menace dans son air,

“Ah! Cruel man” (page 1). Hautbois et basson soulignent avec éloquence sa passion.

Lorenzo da Ponte, qui fait figure de libertin, occupe le poste de poète du théâtre impérial à Vienne. Limogé l'année de la mort de Mozart, il se fait embaucher comme librettiste au nouveau King's Theatre de Haymarket (le théâtre que connaissait Haendel à brûlé entretemps). Poursuivi par ses créanciers, il s'enfuit aux États-Unis et s'y fait épicière, libraire, et professeur de littérature italienne au Columbia College, avant de mourir à New York à l'âge de quatre-vingt-neuf ans.

The Marriage of Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*) (1786) est le premier ouvrage auquel da Ponte et Mozart collaborent, avant *Don Giovanni* et *Così fan tutte*. Il est basé sur une pièce de Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais faisant suite au *Barber of Seville*. Beaumarchais, personnage aussi haut en couleur que da Ponte, s'est attiré des ennuis à Paris en décrivant des valets plus malins que leurs maîtres aristocrates. Le *Barber* a été donné à Vienne dans la version musicale de Paisiello, qui restera au répertoire jusqu'à en être délogée par Rossini, mais *Figaro*, en tant que pièce de

théâtre, a été interdit. Cependant, comme l'écrit un critique de l'époque, déformant légèrement une phrase du *Barber* de Beaumarchais: “Aujourd'hui, ce qui ne peut être dit, on le chante”, ce que fait le *Figaro* de Mozart, même si da Ponte édulcore certains des éléments les plus subversifs.

La comtesse Almaviva et Susanna, sa femme de chambre, projettent de mettre fin aux galanteries du comte en lui jouant un tour. Susanna a donné rendez-vous au comte dans le jardin le soir même; mais c'est la comtesse qui l'y attendra à sa place. Dans “How delightful 'tis to wander” (page 2), Susanna écrit au mari volage sous la dictée de la comtesse. Les voix alternent puis se marient en tierces sensuelles, accompagnées d'un commentaire de hautbois et basson, comme dans *Rinaldo*.

Così fan tutte (1790) signifie “Ainsi font toutes les femmes” (da Ponte préférerait le titre alternatif qui en français donne, plus élégamment, “L'École des amants”). Don Alfonso, vieux célibataire cynique, parie avec ses deux jeunes amis que, pourvu qu'ils obéissent ses ordres à la lettre, il amènera chacune des deux fiancées à transférer ses affections à l'autre galant. La scène se passe à Naples, mais les deux jeunes filles sont de Ferrare: petite plaisanterie de da Ponte, qui a

pour maîtresse l'une des chanteuses de la distribution, que l'on appelle La Ferrarese.

Les deux jeunes gens quittent leur amie, se prétendant appelés sur le champ de bataille, et reviennent déguisés en Albanais. La femme de chambre, qui a été soudoyée par Alfonso mais ne reconnaît pas les deux hommes, encourage ses maîtresses à considérer ces nouveaux soupirants avec faveur. La première à succomber est Dorabella; Fiordiligi – rôle écrit pour Adriana Ferrarese – est d'une étoffe plus résistante, et dans son air: “He's left me... Ah, forgive, my love” (page 3), elle se reproche d'être tentée et implore le pardon de son amant absent. Cette aria est remarquable pour le rôle de premier plan qu'y jouent les cors: Beethoven désapprouvait la tonalité morale de l'opéra mais ne s'est pas fait prier pour emboîter le pas à Mozart en composant le grand monologue de Leonore dans *Fidelio*.

Peu après, Fiordiligi jure de suivre les officiers sur le champ de bataille et d'emmener Dorabella avec elle. Elles revêtiront des uniformes de rechange de leurs amants. (Mais que faisaient donc ces uniformes chez les jeunes filles? se demandera-t-on.) “By tomorrow we'll be together” (page 4), chante-t-elle; mais Ferrando – dont elle essayait précédemment de combattre l'attrait –

l'entend, et les deux jeunes gens ne tardent pas à tomber dans les bras l'un de l'autre. Tout est résolu par le retour des deux hommes sous leur apparence primitive. Don Alfonso a gagné son pari et les couples initiaux se reforment, chacun des quatre fiancés désormais plus triste et plus sage.

“Le Mozart des Champs-Élysées”, disait Rossini d’Offenbach, dont les opérettes font fureur à Paris dans les années 1850–1860. Leur égale popularité à Vienne conduit à la création de produits locaux par Suppé, Millöcker et, surtout, Johann Strauss II. Dès la fin du siècle, leur étoile est sur le déclin, mais l’opérette viennoise reçoit une piqûre de rappel grâce à l’avènement de Franz Lehár et d’Emmerich Kálmán. En un parallèle amusant avec Offenbach, qui n’avait rien de français, aucun des deux compositeurs n’est né en Autriche, mais en Hongrie: Kálmán, de deux parents hongrois, et Lehár d’une mère hongroise.

De nombreuses œuvres tardives de Lehár, dont *Le Tsarévitch* et *Le Pays du sourire*, ont été écrites pour mettre en valeur le ténor Richard Tauber, et ont vu le jour à Berlin. Le plus grand succès du compositeur date toutefois d’avant l’ère Tauber et a été créé à Vienne en 1905. Il s’agit de *The Merry Widow*, dont le

livret, comme celui de tant d’autres opérettes viennoises, y compris le chef-d’œuvre de Strauss, *La Chauve-Souris* (*Die Fledermaus*), est tiré d’un original français. L’histoire se passe de fait à Paris, où le baron Mirko Zeta, envoyé d’un petit État pauvre, le Pontevédro (comprenez, le Monténégro), se préoccupe d’éviter que l’immense fortune d’Hanna Glawari, veuve depuis peu, soit perdue pour son pays.

Il est donc essentiel qu’Hanna épouse un citoyen du Pontevédro, et le choix du baron s’est porté sur le comte Danilo Danilowitsch, secrétaire de la légation pontévédrienne. Danilo, ancien amoureux d’Hanna, feint de préférer la compagnie des petites femmes de chez Maxim’s; mais il finit par avouer son amour pour Hanna, et tout est bien qui finit bien. “A Vilia who liv’d by a cool forest glade” (plage [6]) raconte l’histoire d’une dryade qui abandonne un jeune homme après une nuit d’amour, et c’est l’air que chante Hanna lors d’une garden-party donnée chez elle.

Leo Stein, l’un des deux librettistes de *La Veuve joyeuse*, collabore également à *The Gypsy Princess*; l’œuvre voit le jour en 1915, dix ans après *The Merry Widow*, et comme elle confie le principal rôle féminin à Mizzi Günther. Kálmán a commencé sa

carrière de compositeur d’opérettes avec *Tatárjárás* (*The Gay Hussars*, devenu *Autumn Manœuvres – Manœuvres d’automne* – à son arrivée à Londres), créé à Budapest. *The Gypsy Princess* est suivie de bien d’autres succès, dont *La Comtesse Mariza* en 1924 et *La Princesse du cirque* deux ans plus tard. Une production de *L’Impératrice Joséphine*, créée à Zurich en 1936, est prévue au Staatsoper de Vienne, avec Richard Tauber et Jarmila Novotná qui y a interprété le rôle-titre de la dernière œuvre de Lehár, *Giuditta*; mais l’arrivée des nazis oblige Kálmán à fuir aux États-Unis, via Paris et Londres, et le spectacle n’a jamais lieu.

The Gypsy Princess raconte l’amour entre Sylva Varescu et Edwin, fils du prince von und zu Lippert-Weylersheim. Le prince est résolument opposé au mariage de son fils avec Sylva, vulgaire chanteuse de cabaret, mais finit par céder lorsqu’il s’avère que sa propre femme, veuve et comtesse lorsqu’il l’a épousée, est elle-même une ancienne chanteuse. Dans l’acte central, qui se déroule au palais des Lippert-Weylersheim, à Vienne, Edwin et Sylva se retrouvent chacun avec un autre partenaire. “Where are they now?” (plage [7]) est une valse où ils évoquent leur bonheur passé.

On pourrait penser qu’il y a loin de la légèreté clinquante de l’opérette viennoise aux

dramas plus graves de Richard Strauss, mais les deux univers sont en fait étroitement apparentés. Dans *Le Chevalier à la rose* (*Der Rosenkavalier*), situé à Vienne au XVIII^e siècle, Strauss adopte le langage de son homonyme (sans relation de parenté) et produit une série de valse anachroniques mais brillantes. *Der Rosenkavalier* est le premier livret écrit pour Strauss par le poète et dramaturge viennois Hugo von Hofmannsthal, leur première collaboration datant de l’adaptation de sa pièce de théâtre *Elektra*. Leur dernière collaboration, c’est *Arabella* (1933), mais Hofmannsthal n’en voit jamais l’aboutissement: il meurt subitement en 1929, laissant les actes II et III à l’état de brouillons, et sans avoir pu lire le télégramme de félicitations que lui avait adressé Strauss en recevant la version finale de l’acte I.

Arabella se déroule aussi à Vienne – dans les années 1860, cette fois – et Strauss y fait de nouveau appel à la valse. L’opéra a souffert de comparaisons à son désavantage avec le *Chevalier*; s’il lui manque l’attrait doux-amer de son prédécesseur, il n’en est pas moins précieux pour les pages sensuelles écrites par Strauss pour sa voix favorite: le soprano. Le comte Waldner, aristocrate désargenté, vit à l’hôtel avec sa femme et ses deux filles,

Arabella et Zdenka. Comme il est trop coûteux de lancer deux jeunes filles dans le monde, Zdenka est obligée de se déguiser en garçon. En tant que tel, elle sert de confident(e) à Matteo, jeune officier amoureux d'Arabella qui ne peut comprendre pourquoi sa bien-aimée se montre si froide en sa présence alors qu'elle lui écrit des lettres enflammées. Ce qu'il ne sait pas, bien sûr, c'est que c'est Zdenka, elle-même amoureuse de lui, qui est l'auteur des fausses lettres.

Dans "He's not the one who is right for me" (page 14), Arabella explique ses sentiments à Zdenka. Pour le passage commençant par "The one who's right for me", Strauss adapte un chant populaire des Slaves du Sud, premier des trois utilisés dans l'opéra et empruntés à un recueil du XIX^e siècle. Après la réponse de Zdenka, la mélodie revient, la voix de la sœur cadette s'élevant cette fois au-dessus en un magnifique contrechant.

Arabella finira dans les bras de "l'homme qu'il lui faut": Mandryka, propriétaire terrien croate. Le destin de la Comtesse, dans *Capriccio* (1942), est beaucoup moins certain puisqu'elle "est amoureuse et ne sait pas de qui", comme le rapportent ses serviteurs. Le dernier opéra de Strauss, créé à Munich pendant la guerre, est une conversation en

musique sur un sujet ancien et complexe: l'importance relative de la musique et des paroles dans un opéra. Loin d'une discussion aride, l'histoire prend son essor grâce à l'incarnation des deux arts en Flamand, compositeur, et Olivier, poète, tous deux épris de la Comtesse.

Celle-ci promet de leur faire savoir, le lendemain à onze heures, qui des deux elle aura choisi. Mais, dans la dernière scène (page 8), tandis qu'elle chante pour elle-même le sonnet écrit par Olivier et mis en musique par Flamand, la question – amoureuse autant qu'esthétique – reste en suspens. Peut-être la réponse est-elle donnée à l'orchestre, où un cor solo joue une introduction extatique mais a aussi le dernier mot.

King's Rhapsody, "romance musicale", a été monté pour la première fois en août 1949, quinze jours avant la mort de Strauss. C'est l'une des dernières comédies musicales d'Ivor Novello, avec un texte de Christopher Hassall, dont la plus connue est probablement *The Dancing Years*. Novello jouait le principal rôle masculin dans ses comédies musicales, et participait d'ailleurs à *King's Rhapsody* au moment de sa mort.

L'histoire se passe dans deux royaumes imaginaires (avec une scène à l'Opéra de Paris,

où le jeune Caruso – qui "promet" – chante alors dans *Faust*). La princesse Cristiane de Norvège n'est pas mariée: la Suède et le Danemark ont raflé tous les princes éligibles, et elle n'a rencontré personne dont elle puisse tomber amoureuse. De plus, on l'a surnommée la Reine des Neiges. Peut-être a-t-elle le cœur froid, dit-elle, ou "peut-être est-il juste endormi"; elle chante alors: "Some day my heart will awake" (page 10). Elle épouse ensuite Nikki, prince du royaume balkanique de Murania autrefois en exil, aujourd'hui monté sur le trône, mais les événements politiques les séparent. Nikki abdique et s'exile de nouveau. La mélodie revient à la fin, lorsque leur enfant nouveau-né est couronné roi.

"Some day my heart will awake" est une valse; de même, bien sûr, que "By Strauss" (page 9), écrit par les frères Gershwin pour une revue de Broadway aux multiples auteurs, *The Show Is On*, lancée en décembre 1936. Sa renommée date cependant de bien après la mort de George Gershwin, puisqu'elle a été reprise dans *Un Américain à Paris*. Sorti en octobre 1951, le film a marqué les débuts à l'écran de Leslie Caron, mais ce n'est pas elle qui y chante cette parodie affectueuse, confiée à Georges Guetary et aux deux autres

principaux interprètes masculins, Gene Kelly et Oscar Levant. La pointe humoristique à l'égard de Gershwin et de ses confrères compositeurs n'apparaît pas dans le film, peut-être parce que Irving Berlin et Cole Porter étaient encore vivants. Il serait plaisant de penser que Porter avait la version originale à l'esprit lorsqu'il écrivit "Wunderbar", l'un des tubes de *Kiss me, Kate*.

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Traduction: Josée Bégau

Née en Australie, **Yvonne Kenny** est l'une des plus remarquables sopranos de sa génération. Elle fit ses débuts en opéra à Londres dans le rôle-titre de *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* de Donizetti. Après avoir remporté la Kathleen Ferrier Competition, elle est entrée au Royal Opera de Covent Garden où elle a chanté les rôles de Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Ilia (*Idomeneo*), Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*), Liù (*Turandot*), Aspasia (*Mitridate*) et Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*).

Yvonne Kenny a conquis une réputation internationale dans les grands rôles de Haendel, notamment Semele et Alcina (à Covent Garden et à La Fenice de Venise),

Romilda (*Xerxes*) à l'English National Opera et à l'Opéra d'Etat de Bavière, Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*) et Armida (*Rinaldo*) à Sydney. Elle a également chanté à l'Opéra de San Francisco, à l'Opéra d'Etat de Vienne, à La Scala de Milan, à l'Opéra d'Etat de Berlin, au Bayerische Staatsoper de Munich, à l'Opéra de Paris, à Hambourg, Zurich, Washington et Glyndebourne. Elle se rend fréquemment dans son pays natal, l'Australie, où elle a chanté de nombreux rôles. En 1989, elle a reçu le titre de Member of the Order of Australia for Services to Music.

Les nombreux enregistrements d'Yvonne Kenny incluent *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *The Kingdon* d'Elgar, *The Beggar's Opera* et *Gloriana* de Britten, *Deborah* de Haendel, *The Canterbury Pilgrims* de Dyson (pour Chandos), des extraits de *Der Rosenkavalier*, et un album de la série Great Operatic Arias (pour Chandos et la Peter Moores Foundation), et pour la série Opera Rara, *Emilia di Liverpool*, *L'eremitaggio di Liverpool* et *Ugo, Conte di Parigi* de Donizetti, et *Il crociato in Egitto* de Meyerbeer.

Réputé dans le monde entier comme l'un des chefs les plus estimés et les plus talentueux de

Grande-Bretagne, **Richard Hickox** CBE, actuellement chef principal du BBC National Orchestra of Wales, prendra ses fonctions de directeur musical d'Opera Australia, basé à l'Opéra de Sydney, à partir de janvier 2005. Il est entre autres chef invité associé du London Symphony Orchestra, directeur musical du City of London Sinfonia, ancien directeur artistique et aujourd'hui chef honoraire du Northern Sinfonia ainsi que co-directeur de l'ensemble d'instruments d'époque Collegium Musicum 90 depuis sa fondation en 1990.

Lauréat du *Gramophone Record of the Year* et du meilleur disque orchestral de 2001 (ainsi que d'un *Brit Award*) pour son enregistrement avec le London Symphony Orchestra de la Symphonie no 2 de Vaughan Williams dans la version originale, il s'est vu attribuer de nombreux autres prix, dont un *Grammy* pour *Peter Grimes* et trois autres *Gramophone Awards*. Adepté d'un vaste répertoire, il a régulièrement dirigé les principaux orchestres du Royaume-Uni et a participé à de nombreux festivals, tels ceux d'Aldeburgh, de Bath, Cheltenham ainsi qu'aux Proms de la BBC; sur la scène internationale, il a dirigé bon nombre des plus grands orchestres en Europe, au Japon et en Amérique du Nord. L'opéra

compte pour une grande part dans sa carrière et il a été invité à diriger à l'Opéra d'état de Vienne, à l'English National Opera, au Festival de Spolète en Italie (dont il fut cinq ans directeur musical) ainsi qu'à Sydney, Washington et Los Angeles. Il a été élu professeur honoraire du Queens' College à Cambridge, a reçu un doctorat de musique de l'Université de Durham en 2003 et, en 2002, à l'occasion du cinquantième jubilé de la reine, s'est vu conférer le titre de CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) pour sa contribution à la musique britannique.

Il enregistre en exclusivité pour Chandos, a déjà fait plus de cent cinquante disques pour cette maison et a plusieurs projets à long terme: il doit achever la série d'opéras de Britten avec le City of London Sinfonia, poursuivre son cycle très réussi des symphonies de Vaughan Williams avec le London Symphony Orchestra, terminer des cycles intégraux de musique de Frank Bridge ainsi que de Michael et Sir Lennox Berkeley avec le BBC National Orchestra of Wales et enregistrer des Messes de Hummel et Schubert avec Collegium Musicum 90.

Grandi arie operistiche

La seconda metà del Ventesimo secolo ha visto un notevole revival delle opere drammatiche di Handel, grazie in particolare all'impegno pionieristica della Handel Opera Society, della Kent Opera, e dell'Unicorn Theatre di Abingdon. Negli ultimi vent'anni a questa attività hanno fatto riscontro diverse rappresentazioni di opere e oratori allestiti presso la English National Opera, il Covent Garden e Glyndebourne, spesso con la partecipazione di Yvonne Kenny.

Rinaldo fu la prima opera italiana che Handel compose espressamente per il teatro londinese: la prima si svolse presso il Queen's Theatre di Haymarket (oggi sostituito da Her Majesty's Theatre) all'inizio del 1711 e fu seguita da quindici repliche. La vicenda è ambientata all'epoca della prima Crociata, che culminò con la conquista di Gerusalemme nel 1099. La maga Armida, regina di Damasco, innamorata del cavaliere cristiano Rinaldo, prende le forme della sua fidanzata, ma non riesce a sedurlo. Rinaldo parte all'improvviso, lasciando la donna ad esprimere uno stato d'animo in cui si alternano le suppliche e le minacce in "Ah! Cruel Man" ("Ah! Crudel")

(traccia 1). L'oboe e il fagotto sottolineano eloquentemente i suoi sentimenti.

Lorenzo da Ponte, personalità avventurosa e libertina, fu poeta dei teatri di corte di Vienna, che abbandonò nell'anno della morte di Mozart. Successivamente venne assunto presso il nuovo King's Theatre di Haymarket (il teatro noto a Handel era stato distrutto da un incendio). Per sfuggire ai creditori fu costretto a trasferirsi negli Stati Uniti dove fece il droghiere, il libraio e il professore di letteratura italiana presso il Columbia College. Morì a New York all'età di ottantanove anni.

The Marriage of Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*, 1786) fu la prima delle collaborazioni tra da Ponte e Mozart, insieme con *Don Giovanni* e *Così fan tutte*. Si ispira al dramma di Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, concepito come seguito del *Barbiere di Siviglia*. Beaumarchais, personaggio originale quanto Ponte, aveva suscitato controversie a Parigi perché le sue opere vedevano il trionfo delle classi inferiori sull'aristocrazia. Il *Barbiere* musicato da Paisiello fu rappresentato Vienna e rimase in repertorio finché non venne eclissato dalla versione di Rossini, ma il dramma teatrale

Figaro fu messo al bando. Tuttavia, come scrisse un recensore dell'epoca, citando impropriamente il *Barbiere* di Beaumarchais, "ciò che non si può dire oggi si canta". Il *Figaro* di Mozart fu realizzato, anche se da Ponte addolcì alcuni degli elementi più sovversivi.

La contessa Almaviva e la sua cameriera Susanna pensano di mettere fine alle scappatelle sentimentali del Conte con uno stratagemma. Almaviva deve incontrare Susanna in giardino quella sera; ma all'appuntamento si reca invece sua moglie. In "How delightful 'tis to wander" ("Che soave zeffiretto") (traccia 2), Susanna scrive al marito adultero su dettatura della contessa. Le voci si alternano e quindi si accoppiano in sensuali terze; come nel *Rinaldo*, il commento viene fornito dall'oboe e dal fagotto.

In **Così fan tutte** (1790), don Alfonso, scapolo cinico e incallito, scommette con due giovani amici che riuscirà a convincere le loro fidanzate a tradirli. L'opera è ambientata a Napoli, ma le donne sono di Ferrara e non si tratta di una coincidenza: una delle cantanti, soprannominata La Ferrarese, era amante di da Ponte.

Fingendo di essere stati richiamati al fronte i due giovani lasciano le fidanzate e ritornano travestiti da albanesi. La cameriera, che è stata

pagata da Alfonso ma non riconosce i due, incoraggia le padrone ad essere compiacenti con i nuovi spasimanti. La prima a cedere è Dorabella; Fiordiligi, (la parte scritta per La Ferrarese), è meno malleabile, e in "He's left me... Ah, forgive, my love" ("Per pietà, ben mio, perdona") (traccia 3) si rimprovera perché si sente tentata e supplica il perdono dell'innamorato assente. L'aria è notevole per la parte di rilievo interpretata dal corno. Beethoven biasimò il tono moralistico dell'opera, ma finì per imitarlo nel grande soliloquio composto per Leonora nel *Fidelio*.

Poco dopo Fiordiligi giura di travestirsi da ufficiale per seguire il promesso sposo sul campo di battaglia. Vuole condurre con sé Dorabella e pregusta l'incontro "By tomorrow we'll be together" ("Fra gli amplessi in pochi istanti") (traccia 4), ma per caso la sente Ferrando. I precedenti tentativi di resistere alle sue lusinghe sono vani e ben presto i due cadono l'una nelle braccia dell'altro. Tutto si risolve quando gli uomini rientrano nei propri panni. Don Alfonso ha vinto la scommessa e si riallacciano i legami come prima, ma i quattro giovani sono maturati e hanno imparato la lezione.

"Il Mozart degli Champs-Élysées": così Rossini definì Offenbach, le cui operette fecero furore a Parigi nei decenni del 1850 e 1860. Il

loro successo raggiunse anche Vienna, e questo portò alla creazione di prodotti nazionali firmati da Suppé, Millöcker e, soprattutto, Johann Strauss figlio. Alla fine del secolo la loro fortuna cominciava ad esaurirsi, ma l'operetta viennese ebbe una salutare trasfusione grazie all'avvento di Franz Lehár e Emmerich Kálmán. Come Offenbach, che non era di nazionalità francese, i due compositori non erano austriaci, ma ungheresi: Kálmán era figlio di ungheresi, la madre di Lehár era ungherese.

Molte delle opere della maturità di Lehár, tra cui *Der Zarewitsch* e *Das Land des Lächelns*, furono composte per il tenore Richard Tauber e rappresentate per la prima volta a Berlino. Il maggior successo del compositore, però, è precedente e la sua prima si svolse a Vienna nel 1905. Si tratta di **The Merry Widow** (*Die lustige Witwe*), la cui storia, come quella di molte operette viennesi, compreso il capolavoro di Strauss, *Die Fledermaus*, è ispirata a un originale francese. La vicenda infatti si svolge a Parigi, dove il barone Mirko Zeta, ambasciatore del piccolo e impoverito stato del Pontevedro (Montenegro), è ansioso di impedire la fuga dell'enorme capitale della giovane vedova Hanna Glawari.

È indispensabile, quindi, che Hanna sposi un pontevedrino, e il candidato del barone è il conte Danilo Danilowitsch, attaché dell'ambasciata. Danilo, innamorato in passato di Hanna, finge di preferire la compagnia delle ragazze di Maxim; ma alla fine confessa il proprio amore per Hanna, e tutto finisce bene. Il brano "A Vilia who liv'd by a cool forest glade" (traccia [6]), storia di una ninfa che abbandona un giovane dopo una notte d'amore, è cantato da Hanna a una festa nel giardino della sua casa.

Leo Stein, uno dei due librettisti della *Vedova allegra*, ripeté l'impresa con **The Gypsy Princess**, la cui prima si svolse nel 1915, dieci anni dopo *The Merry Widow*, e fu interpretata dalla stessa protagonista, Mizzi Günther. La carriera operettistica di Kálmán era iniziata con *Manovre d'autunno*, che ebbe la sua prima a Budapest. Alla *Gypsy Princess* seguirono molti altri successi, tra cui *La contessa Maritza* nel 1924 e *La principessa del circo* due anni dopo. All'Opera di Vienna era previsto un allestimento dell'*Imperatrice Giuseppina*, eseguita per la prima volta a Zurigo nel 1936, con Richard Tauber e Jarmila Novotná, che nello stesso teatro aveva interpretato l'ultima opera di Lehár, *Giuditta*; ma all'arrivo dei nazisti, Kálmán fuggì passando per Parigi e

Londra negli USA e lo spettacolo non si svolse mai.

The Gypsy Princess è la storia dell'amore tra Sylva Varescu ed Evino, figlio del principe di Lippert-Weylersheim. Il principe è risolutamente contrario all'unione di suo figlio con Sylva, una semplice cantante, ma finalmente si convince quando si vene a sapere che anche sua moglie, contessa vedova all'epoca delle nozze, era stata in passato cantante. Nel secondo atto, che si svolge nel palazzo Lippert-Weylersheim di Vienna, Edvino e Sylva hanno ciascuno un partner diverso. "Where are they now?" (traccia [7]) è un valzer in cui ricordano la loro felicità passata.

Il passaggio alle composizioni più serie di Richard Strauss può sembrare molto lontano dall'operetta viennese, brillante e spumeggiante, ma in realtà i due mondi sono strettamente connessi. In *Der Rosenkavalier*, ambientato nella Vienna del settecento, Strauss adottò la lingua del proprio omonimo (ma non parente), producendo una serie di valzer anacronistici ma brillanti. *Der Rosenkavalier* fu il primo libretto firmato dal poeta e drammaturgo viennese Hugo von Hofmannsthal per Strauss, ma la loro prima effettiva collaborazione era stata l'adattamento del dramma teatrale *Elektra*.

Arabella (1933) fu l'ultima, ma Hofmannsthal non vide mai il risultato: morì all'improvviso nel 1929, lasciando stesure preliminari del secondo e terzo atto e senza aver letto il telegramma di congratulazioni che Strauss gli aveva inviato dopo aver ricevuto la versione finale del primo atto.

Anche la vicenda di *Arabella* si svolge a Vienna – questa volta nel decennio del 1860 – e anche in questo caso Strauss utilizza il valzer. L'opera ha risentito negativamente del confronto con *Der Rosenkavalier*, ma è comunque preziosa per la sensualità dei brani che Strauss compose per la sua voce preferita, quella del soprano. Un nobile impoverito, il conte Waldner, vive con la moglie e due figlie, Arabella e Zdenka, in un albergo. Per risparmiare le spese di presentazione in società di ambedue le due figlie, Zdenka è costretta a travestirsi da uomo e diventa confidente di Matteo, un giovane ufficiale innamorato di Arabella. L'ufficiale non riesce a spiegarsi la strana freddezza della donna, che gli scrive però lettere appassionate. Naturalmente le lettere sono contraffatte da Zdenka, innamorata di lui.

In "He's not the one who is right for me" (traccia [8]), Arabella spiega i suoi sentimenti a Zdenka. Per il brano Strauss adatta un motivo folcloristico slavo del sud che compare

nell'opera con altri due trovati dal compositore in una raccolta ottocentesca. Dopo la risposta di Zdenka il motivo ritorna, questa volta con la splendida partecipazione della sorella minore nella parte superiore.

Arabella finirà per sposare l'uomo giusto: Mandryka, un proprietario terriero della Croazia. Il destino della contessa in **Capriccio** (1942) è molto più incerto dal momento che, come dice la sua cameriera, la donna "è innamorata e non sa di chi". L'ultima opera di Strauss, la cui prima si svolse a Monaco durante la guerra, è una conversazione su un argomento antico e complesso, l'importanza della musica e delle parole nell'opera. Ma non si tratta di un dibattito arido, in quanto viene affidato ai due innamorati della contessa: un compositore, Flamand, e un poeta, Olivier.

La donna promette di rivelare la propria decisione alle undici del giorno successivo. Ma nell'ultima scena (traccia [8]), mentre canta a se stessa il sonetto scritto da Olivier e accompagnato dalla musica di Flamand, la questione amorosa, oltre che estetica, rimane in sospenso. Forse la risposta sta nell'orchestra, dove il corno solista esegue una stupenda introduzione e ha l'ultima parola.

King's Rhapsody, definito "musical romance", fu rappresentato per la prima volta

nell'agosto del 1949, quindici giorni prima della morte di Strauss. Fu uno degli ultimi drammi in musica di Ivor Novello, con parole di Christopher Hassall, il più famoso dei quali è probabilmente *The Dancing Years*. Novello fu protagonista maschile dei suoi drammi musicali e anche di *King's Rhapsody*.

La trama si svolge in due regni immaginari (con una scena all'Opéra di Parigi, dove il giovane Caruso, allora solo una promessa, canta nel *Faust*). La principessa Cristiane di Norseland è nubile: la Svezia e la Danimarca si sono accaparrate tutti i principi e la giovane non conosce nessuno di cui potrebbe innamorarsi. Per di più, è stata soprannominata la principessa delle Nevi. Ma il suo cuore potrebbe essere "solo addormentato": questo è l'avvio di "Some day my heart will awake" (traccia [10]). La principessa poi sposa Nikki, principe del regno di Murania sui Balcani, prima esiliato e poi salito al trono, ma alcuni avvenimenti politici li separano. Nikki abdica e torna in esilio. La canzone ritorna alla fine, quando il loro bambino viene incoronato re.

"Some day my heart will awake" è un valzer, come "By Strauss" (traccia [9]), naturalmente. Quest'ultimo brano fu composto dai fratelli Gershwin per **The Show Is On**, spettacolo di

rivista di Broadway realizzato da molti autori diversi, che aprì nel dicembre del 1936. La sua fama è però legata al periodo successivo alla morte di George Gershwin, quando fu incluso in *Un Americano a Parigi*. Il film, che uscì nell'ottobre 1951, segnava l'esordio sullo schermo di Leslie Caron, ma non fu l'attrice a cantare quest'affettuosa parodia, che venne affidata a Georges Guetary e agli altri personaggi maschili, Gene Kelly e Oscar Levant. Nel film non compare il divertente riferimento a Gershwin e ai suoi colleghi compositori, forse perché Irving Berlin e Cole Porter erano ancora in vita. Sarebbe bello pensare che Porter avesse in mente la versione originale quando compose "Wunderbar", uno dei brani di successo di *Kiss me, Kate*.

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Traduzione: Emanuela Guastella

Yvonne Kenny è nata in Australia ed è uno dei più illustri soprani della sua generazione. Esordiva in opera a Londra nel ruolo della protagonista in *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* di Donizetti. Dopo la vittoria al concorso intitolato al nome di Kathleen Ferrier è entrata a far parte della Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, dove è stata Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*),

Ilia (*Idomeneo*), Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*), Liù (*Turandot*), Aspasia (*Mitridate*) e Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*).

Si è conquistata una reputazione internazionale per i grandi ruoli del repertorio handeliano, soprattutto Semele e Alcina (Covent Garden e La Fenice) Romilda (*Xerxes*) per English National Opera l'Opera nazionale della Baviera, Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*) e Armida (*Rinaldo*) a Sydney. Ha cantato anche all'Opera di San Francisco, all'Opera di Vienna, alla Scala di Milano, alla Berlin Staatsoper, l'Opera di Monaco, l'Opéra di Parigi e poi ad Amburgo, Zurigo, Washington e Glyndebourne. Spesso fa ritorno nel suo paese d'origine, l'Australia, dove ha interpretato numerosi ruoli. Nel 1989 è stata nominata Member of the Order of Australia for Services to Music.

La ricca discografia di Yvonne Kenny comprende *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *The Kingdom* di Elgar, *The Beggar's Opera* e *Gloriana* di Britten, *Deborah* di Handel, *The Canterbury Pilgrims* di Dyson (per Chandos), momenti salienti dal *Rosenkavalier* e un disco di Great Operatic Arias (Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation), e per Opera Rara *Emilia di Liverpool*, *L'eremitaggio di Liverpool* e *Ugo, Conte di*

Parigi di Donizetti, e *Il crociato in Egitto* di Meyerbeer.

Considerato uno dei direttori d'orchestra più rispettati e versatili a livello internazionale, **Richard Hickox**, attuale direttore stabile della BBC National Orchestra of Wales, è stato nominato di recente Direttore musicale di Opera Australia, l'orchestra della Sydney Opera House, a partire dal gennaio 2005. Inoltre è direttore associato ospite della London Symphony Orchestra, direttore musicale della City of London Sinfonia, ex Direttore artistico e oggi Conductor Emeritus della Northern Sinfonia e co-direttore dell'organico di strumenti d'epoca Collegium Musicum 90 fin dalla sua formazione nel 1990.

Vincitore del *Gramophone Record of the Year* e del migliore disco di musica orchestrale del 2001 con la registrazione della sinfonia n. 2 di Vaughan Williams con la London Symphony Orchestra nella versione originale (a cui è stato assegnato anche un Brit Award), Richard Hickox ha al suo attivo numerosi riconoscimenti, tra cui un *Grammy* per *Peter Grimes* e altri tre premi *Gramophone*. Impegnato in un vasto repertorio, ha diretto regolarmente le principali orchestre del Regno

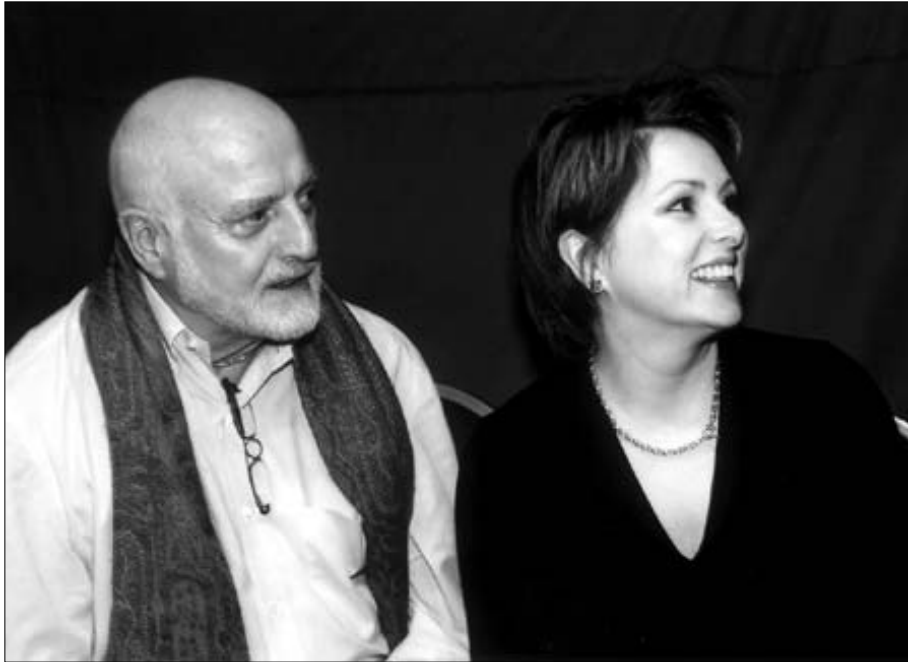
Unito ed è intervenuto ai festival di Aldeburgh, Bath, Cheltenham e ai Prom della BBC; a livello internazionale ha diretto molte importanti orchestre in Europa, Giappone e America del nord. La direzione delle orchestre teatrali rappresenta una gran parte delle sue attività e Richard Hickox è stato ospite dell'Opera di Vienna, dell'English National Opera, del Festival di Spoleto (per cui è stato direttore musicale per 5 anni), e dei teatri lirici di Sydney, Washington e Los Angeles. È stato eletto Honorary Fellow del Queens' College di Cambridge, ha ricevuto un Dottorato in musica presso l'università di Durham nel 2003 ed è stato insignito del CBE, un'onorificenza reale, nel 2002 per il suo contributo alla musica britannica.

La sua associazione esclusiva con Chandos, con una discografia che riunisce già 150 titoli, continuerà con il completamento della versione integrale delle opere di Britten con la City of London Sinfonia, il proseguimento dell'apprezzato ciclo di sinfonie di Vaughan Williams con la London Symphony Orchestra, l'opera integrale di Frank Bridge e Michael e Lennox Berkeley con la BBC National Orchestra of Wales, e le messe di Hummel e Schubert con il Collegium Musicum 90.



Clive Barada /ArenalPAL

Yvonne Kenny as Aspasia in The Royal Opera's production of Mozart's *Mitridate*



Russell Duncan

Session photo: Sir Peter Moores and Rebecca Evans



Branco Gaica

Yvonne Kenny in the title role of Opera Australia's production of Handel's *Alcina*

from Rinaldo

Armida's Aria

Armida

- [1] Ah! Cruel man,
my bitter weeping
must find pity in your soul!
(Be kind, cruel man, my tears must find pity in
your soul!)
Or if you disdain my pleading,
I will strike the crueller blow (Ah!).
*G. Rossi, based on a scenario by A. Hill after Tasso,
translation by Amanda Holden*

from The Marriage of Figaro

Letter Duet

Countess

- [2] Well, did you tell him? What was his Lordship's
answer?

Susanna

Oh, there was no mistaking that my Lord's very
angry.

Countess

Well done! It will be easier now to catch him.
And where did you invite him to look for you
this evening?

Susanna

In the garden.

Countess

We'll make it clearer. Write to him.

Susanna

I? Write to him? Oh, my lady!

Countess

Write what I tell you, I take the whole
responsibility. Have you ev'rything ready?

Duet

Susanna (*writing*)

I'm ready.

Countess (*dictating*)

'How delightful 'tis to wander.'

Susanna

'Tis to wander...'

Countess

'By the breath of evening fann'd.'

Susanna

'By the breath of evening fann'd.'

Countess

'Where the scented pines are closest...'

Susanna

Where the what, ma'am?

Countess

'Where the scented pines are closest.'

Susanna

'Where the scented pines are closest.'

Countess

And the rest he'll understand.

Susanna

Yes, the rest he'll understand.

Countess

Let me see what you've written

Susanna

'How delightful 'tis to wander...'

Countess

'By the breath of evening fann'd...'

Susanna

'Where the scented pines are closest...'

Countess

And the rest he'll understand.

Susanna and Countess

Yes, the rest he'll understand.

*Da Ponte after Beaumarchais,
translation by E.J. Dent,*

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from Così fan tutte

Fiordiligi's Recitative and Rondo

Fiordiligi

Recitative

- [3] He's left me... Listen... Ah, no! It is much
better to send away temptation, he is unworthy
and my longings are shameful. And to what
torment this cruel man has lead me... Yet I
deserve it for my sinful behaviour... At such a
moment had I the right to listen to a new lover's
plea? And treat so lightly my beloved's devotion?

Ah, I am guilty: you were right to condemn me,
O righteous love! I'm burning, and yet this
burning is not kindled by a noble emotion: it's
madness, confusion, self-doubting and
remorseful, superficial, dishonest, wicked
betrayal!

Rondo

Ah, forgive, my love, forgive me,
my poor heart is torn with sorrow:
in this garden, in deepest shadow,
let me bury, O God, my shame.
I must kill these sinful wishes
by my faith and my devotion,
I'll deny the sweet temptation
whence my guilty betrayal came.

Ah, forgive, my love, forgive me,
my poor heart is torn with sorrow:
in this garden, in deepest shadow,
let me bury, O God, my shame.
How, my dear, could I forget you?
What have I to give you now?
This is all the prize I bring you,
faithless heart and broken vow.
Now, my dear, my love, forgive me,
for my heart is torn with sorrow.
I must kill these sinful wishes
by my faith and my devotion,
I'll deny the sweet temptation
whence my first betrayal came.

*Da Ponte, translation by Anne Ridler,
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from Arabella

Arabella and Zdenka's Duet

Arabella

⁴ He's not the one who is right for me.
I really mean it. I only tell you what is true!
It's really not my fault, that's how I am.
A man may soon mean much to me,
but suddenly he means no longer anything.
It happens right in here and soon, I don't know
how,
something begins to ask, and I do not know
what the answer is.
I try by day and night and quite without
my will
my heart begins to turn;
it turns away from him,
there's nothing I can do.

The one who's right for me
if there is one for me in all this world,
he will stand before me, there he'll be,
his eyes on me, mine on him,
and no more doubting will remain
and no more asking, and happy,
so happy I shall be and obey him like a child.

Zdenka (*looking at her lovingly*)

I do not know your heart,
you may be right or wrong,
but I am too fond of you to know!
I want you to be happy
with someone who is good

and I will give you all my help.
For that is what the fortune teller said,
'She bathed in light and I in utter darkness'.

Arabella (*aside*)

The one who's right for me,
if there is one for me in all this world,
he will stand before me, there he'll be,
his eyes upon me, mine on him,
and no more doubting will remain and no more
asking,
and happy, happy I shall be and obedient like a
child.

Zdenka (*aside*)

She is so lovely and so sweet.
I'll go away and still in parting I will bless you,
yes, I will bless you dearest sister.

*'Aber der Richtige' from Arabella, Op. 79
by Strauss/Hofmannsthal.*

English translation by John Gutman.

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from Così fan tutte

Fiordiligi and Ferrando's Duet

Fiordiligi

⁵ By tomorrow we'll be together.
I shall find my faithful lover;

in disguise then, I'll run to find him,
in his loving arms I'll stay.
Oh, how happy he'll be to see me,
we'll be safe when we're together!

Ferrando

By your cruelty, by your desertion,
you have sentenced me to die.

Fiordiligi

Do not taunt me...
You've betrayed me!
Go, please leave me!

Ferrando

Ah, no, my dearest,
you must take your sword and kill me,
for I have no life without you;
if your strength, O God, should falter
I will guide your hand with mine.

Fiordiligi

Never... Alas...
Do not torment a heart that's desolate and broken!

Ferrando

Ah, her will begins to weaken,
I perceive from her sad glances
her defences soon must fail.

Fiordiligi

Ah, my will begins to weaken,
through his words and his fond glances
my defences soon must fail.
Leave me, leave me...

Ferrando

I beg you, hear me.

Fiordiligi

Pity's sake, what are you asking?

Ferrando

Your heart or I die before you.

(He takes her hand and kisses it.)

Fiordiligi

I am weak, do not confuse me,
cruel gods who so abuse me, gods, advise me.

Ferrando

Yield, my dearest, yield, my dearest...
Turn to me your lovely eyes,
here your heart shall find all desire,
husband and lover, and more if you desire,
ah, my love, do not delay.

Fiordiligi

Ah, dear God, I am lost, defeated...
Do with me as you desire.

Fiordiligi and Ferrando

I must hold you, ah, my beloved;
such sweet comfort after sorrow
offers joys and soft affection,
whispers pleasure and delight, sweet delight.

*Da Ponte, translation by Anne Ridler,
© Anne Ridler Estate*

from The Merry Widow

Vilia Song

Anna

6 A Vilia who liv'd by a cool forest glade
had fallen asleep in the deep leafy shade.
A youth wander'd near to the place where she lay,
her beauty entranc'd him, he'd not look away.
Suddenly the nymph awoke,
and music fill'd the air above,
how he sighed, swearing eternal love,

Vilia, Oh Vilia, O nymph of delight,
haunting the woodland, enchanting the night.
Vilia, Oh Vilia, be tender and true,
Love me and I'll die for you!

Chorus

Vilia, Oh Vilia, O nymph of delight,
haunting the woodland, enchanting the night.

Anna

Vilia, Oh Vilia, be tender, be true,
love me, and I'll die for you.

She then wove a spell with a wave of her hand,
transporting him into a strange fairy land.
No mortal e'er knew such enchanting delight,
entwin'd in her arms for one magical night.
Suddenly at dawn of day
she vanished far away,
hill and vale echo with his mournful tale.
Vilia, Oh Vilia, O nymph of delight,
haunting the woodland, enchanting the night.

Vilia, Oh Vilia, be tender and true,
Love me and I'll die for you!

Chorus

Vilia, Oh Vilia, O nymph of delight,
haunting the woodland, enchanting the night.

Anna

Vilia, Oh Vilia, be tender, be true,
love me, and I'll die for you.

Chorus

I'll die for you.

*Léon and Stein after H. Meilbac,
English version by Christopher Hassall,
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from The Gypsy Princess

Sylva and Edwin's Duet

Sylva

7 Festive laughter, celebration,
friends around me, jubilation,
Music playing, lights ablaze!

Edwin

Glasses clinking, waiters beaming,
dancers whirling, jewels gleaming.
Ev'rything's a golden haze!

Sylva

All of us were touched by magic,
a dream to cherish and adore.
Such memories as these stay with us all our lives,
yes, for evermore.

Sylva and Edwin

But happiness and love's enchantment
are gone for ever and a day.

Sylva

Like fading phantom figures
they are out of reach.
So far away.

Edwin

Where are they now?
Words so devotedly spoken?
Gone like a dream,
gone with the dawning of day.
Where are they now,
vows which could never be broken?
Where are they now?
Where are the love and the hope?
Where are they now?
Promises which none could sever,
now so soon they're gone forever,
and a husband's at your side.

Sylva

Other eyes so sweetly smiling,
soft embraces, words beguiling,
Edwin and his lovely bride!

Edwin

How could you destroy that magic,
destroy our own enchanted spell?
The love I felt for you no words could ever tell,
none could ever tell.

Sylva and Edwin

And yet of such a tender passion
the memory alone is left

Sylva

Two wounded hearts of all their cherished
dreams bereft, ever bereft.

Sylva

Where are they now,
words so devotedly spoken?
Gone like a dream,
gone with the dawning of day.
Where are they now,
vows which could never be broken?

Sylva and Edwin

Where are they now?
Where are the love and the hope?
Where are they now?

Sylva

Just a fairytale romance,
how confusing,
just a momentary fling,
how amusing!
Just a comic episode,
simply splendid,
so let's laugh now it has ended!
La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la,
simply splendid,
la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la,
now it's ended.

Sylva and Edwin

Just a fairytale romance,
unenduring.
Now it's over.
Dead and gone!
Where are they now?
Where are the love and the laughter?
Oh, where are they now?

*L. Stein and B. Jenbach,
translation by Opera Australia,
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from Capriccio

Closing Scene

Countess

8 Where is my brother?

Major-Domo

The Count took Mademoiselle Clairon back to Paris, my Lady. He asked me to give you his apologies.

Countess *(smiling)*

Then I shall dine alone this evening. *(to herself)*
What an enviable disposition. His fancies
fleeting. How did he express it? 'Calmly
deciding, lightly possessing, momentary joy, life's
greatest treasure.'

(She sighs.)

Ah, how simple!

(To the Major-Domo, who has remained at the door)

What else?

Major-Domo

Monsieur Olivier desires to pay a visit after
breakfast tomorrow, to ask my Lady about the
ending of the opera.

Countess

The opera's ending? When will he be here?

Major-Domo

He says he will wait in the library.

Countess

In the library? When?

Major-Domo

At eleven o'clock.

Countess

At eleven o'clock.
Since writing the sonnet,
it is their fate to be bound together.
Flamand will be quite disappointed
when he finds dear Olivier there instead of me
tomorrow.

And I? The opera's ending,

am I to tell them the final decision
whether the verses move my heart more deeply,
whether it is the music that has more power?
*(The Countess takes the manuscript of the sonnet in
her hand, sits at the harp and, accompanying
herself, begins to sing.)*

'No other, whose beauty inflames my heart,
no loved one, none by whom my dreams are
haunted,

no other, whom as much as you I've wanted,

can with your love such perfect bliss impart.
Your eyes delight and keenest pain bestow,
indeed one glance might plunge me deep in
sorrow,

another give delight and hope tomorrow,
two glances then bring life or mortal blow.'
(interrupting herself)

In vain do I try to keep them apart,
for words and music are blended together
to form a single creation.

Mysterious moment, one art by the other
redeemed!

*(She reaches again for the harp, and sings the
sonnet through to the end.)*

'Were yet my life prolonged beyond all measure,
no other being's favour would I treasure,
no other passion could my heart embrace.
My veins would need new blood were it to
flower,
you fill my heart completely, yours this power,
new love could never find a hold or place.'

How their love is rising to meet me,
gently woven of verses and music.

How can I tear this delicate fabric?

Am I myself not part of its texture?

To make a decision for the noble spirit with the
loving glances,

for Olivier the ardent soul, the ever impassioned
man?

(She suddenly sees herself in the mirror.)

Well, dearest Madeleine, what says your heart?

Ah, you are loved, yet could not surrender.

Oh, but it was sweet not to choose!

You tried to make a treaty with passion,
and now you are on fire and cannot find refuge!

One to be chosen, so losing the other.

Are we not the losers, whenever we gain?

(looking in the mirror again)

A gaze that's ironic looks back at me!

I look for your answer, and not for the question
in your eyes!

Still mute? Why Madeleine!

Are you between two fires now burning?

(She takes a step nearer the mirror.)

Dear looking glass, I see lovelorn Madeleine,

ah, please advise me,

ah, can you help me to find the answer,

the end for our opera?

Can I find one that is not trivial?

(The Major-Domo enters and stays by the door.)

Major-Domo

My Lady, your supper is served.

*(The Countess smiles and looks in the mirror, gives
herself a small wave and curtseys.)*

Schlusszene from Capriccio, Op. 85 by Strauss/Krauss.

English translation by Maria Massey Pelikan.

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from The Show Is On

'By Strauss'

9 Away with the music of Broadway!
 Be off with your Irving Berlin!
 Oh, I'd give no quarter
 to Kern or Cole Porter
 and Gershwin keeps pounding on tin.
 How can I be civil
 when hearing this drivel?
 It's only for night-clubbing souses.
 Oh, give me the free 'n' easy
 waltz that is Viennese
 and go tell the band
 if they want a hand
 the waltz must be Strauss's!
 Ya, ya, ya!
 Give me oom-pah-pah!
 When I want a melody
 lilting through the house
 Then I want a melody
 by Strauss!
 It laughs! It sings!
 The world is in rhyme
 swinging to three-quarter time.
 Let the 'Danube' flow along
 and the 'Fledermaus'!
 Keep the wine and give me song
 by Strauss!
 By Jo! By Jing!
 'By Strauss' is the thing!
 So I say to ha-cha-cha Heraus!

Just give me an oom-pah-pah
by Strauss!

*Music and Lyrics by George Gershwin and Ira Gershwin.
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from King's Rhapsody

Princess Cristiane's Song
Some day my heart will awake

10 Some day my heart will awake.
 Some day the morning will break.
 Music will open my eyes,
 showing the skies
 golden with rapture.
 Maybe this gentle refrain
 some day will echo again,
 bringing my lover's caress,
 bidding my heart say 'Yes'.

Lazy heart! Lazy heart!
The leaves of summer fall and die,
but still you drift along the stream,
not even troubled by a dream.
The birds are mating,
but while you're waiting,
time slips by.

Some day my heart will awake.
Some day the morning will break.
Music will open my eyes,
showing the skies
golden with rapture.

Maybe this gentle refrain
some day will echo again,
bringing my lover's caress,
bidding my heart say 'Yes'.

*Words by Christopher Hassall.
 Music by Ivor Novello.*

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Session photo: Yvonne Kenny and
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Russell Duncan



Branco Galica



Yvonne Kenny as Sylva
in Opera Australia's
production of Kálmán's
The Gypsy Princess

56

Bill Raufery



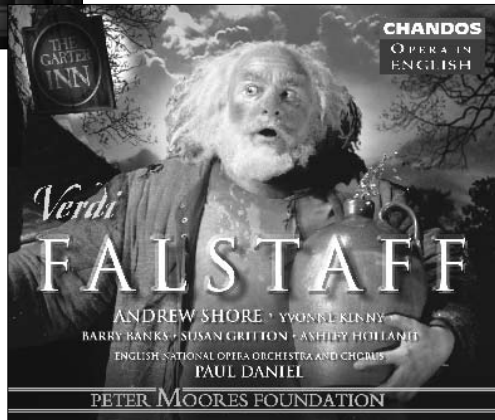
Yvonne Kenny as the
Marschallin in English National
Opera's production of Strauss's
Der Rosenkavalier

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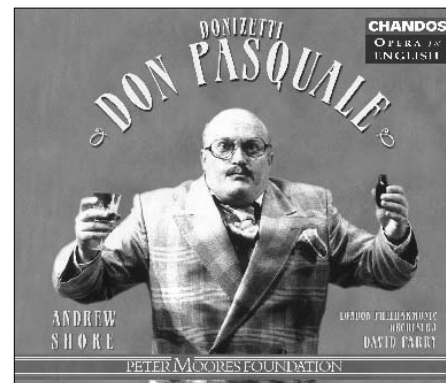


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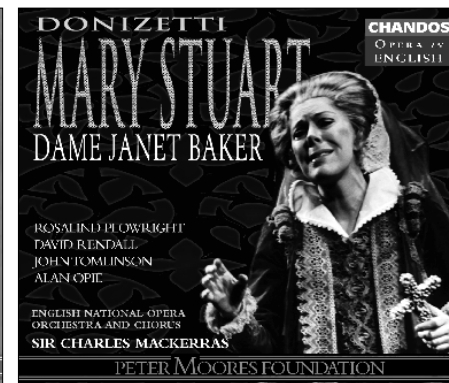


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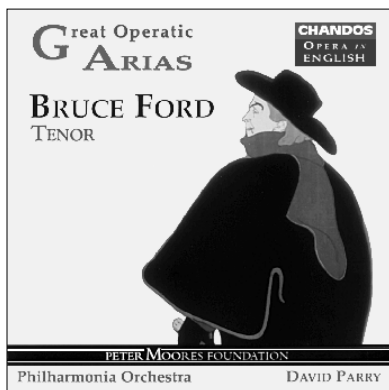


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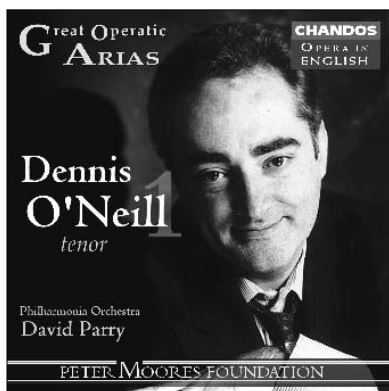
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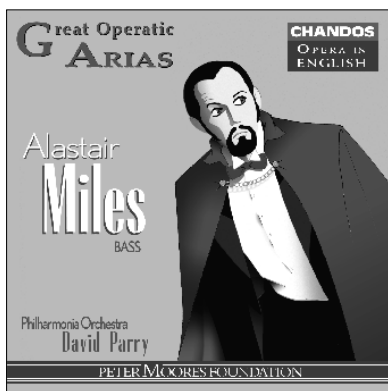
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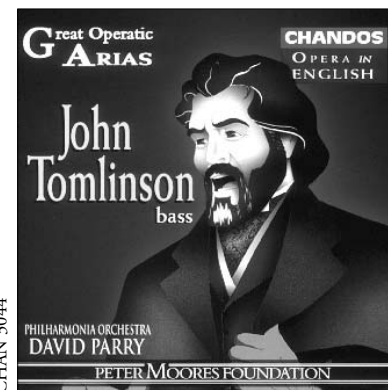
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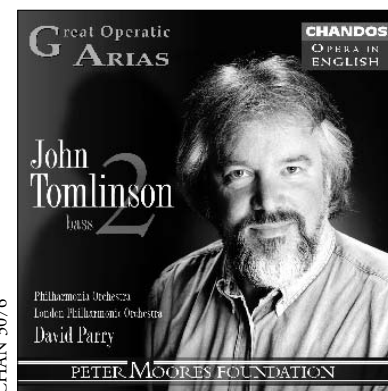
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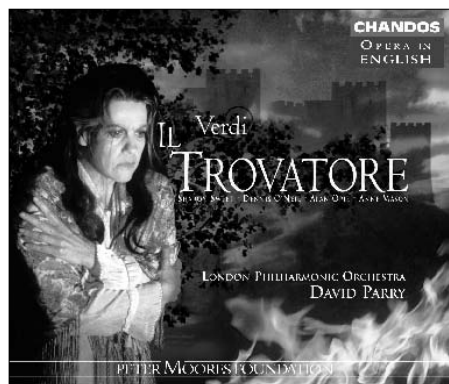


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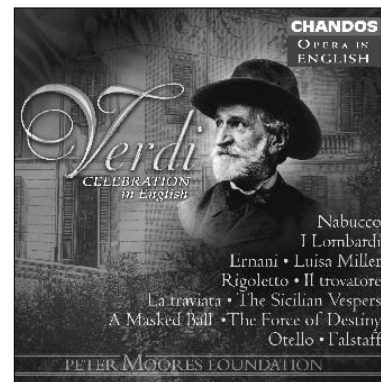
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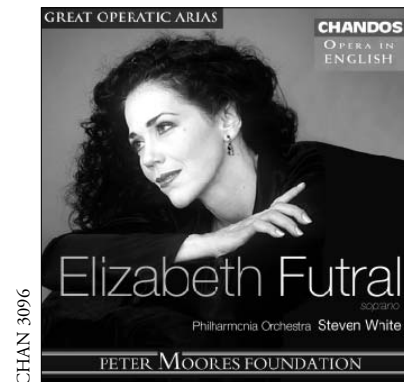
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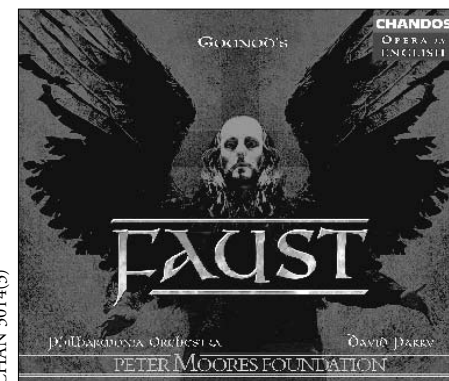


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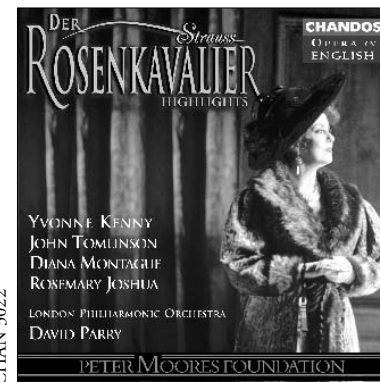
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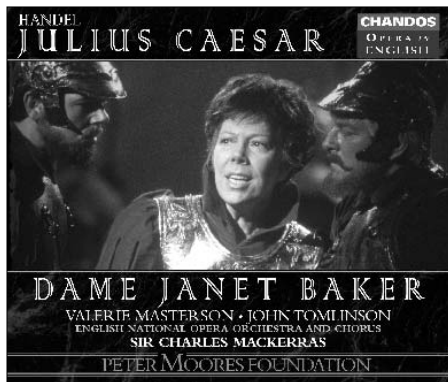
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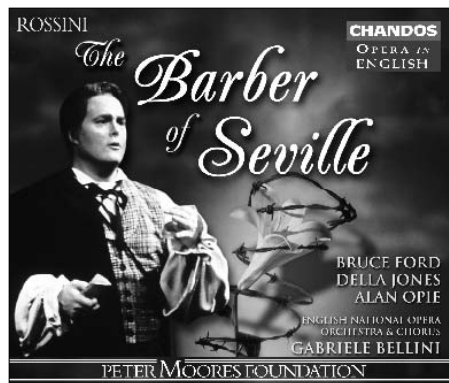


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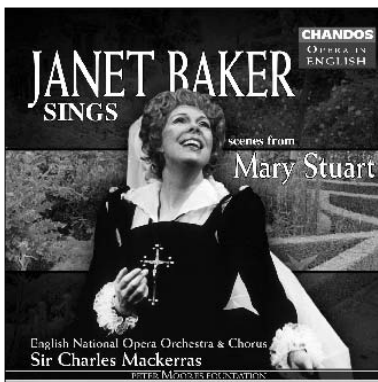
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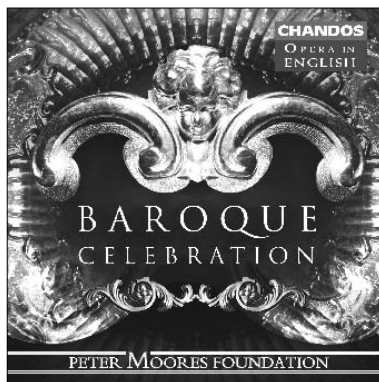
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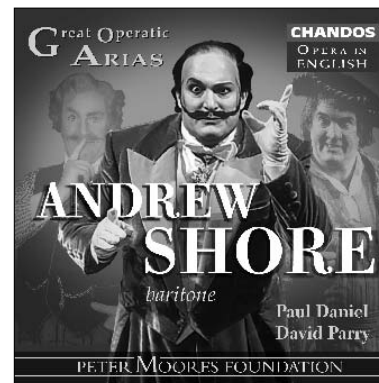
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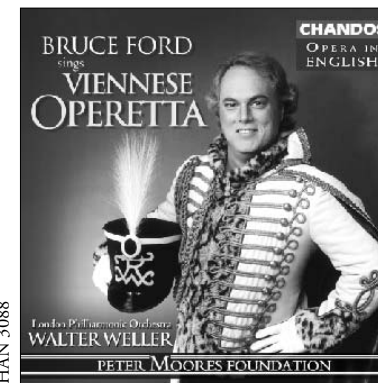


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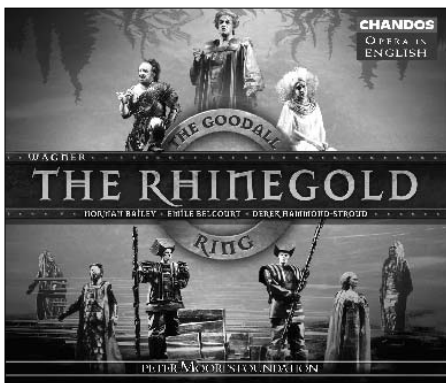


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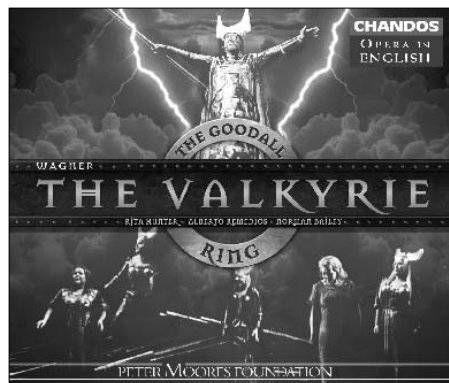


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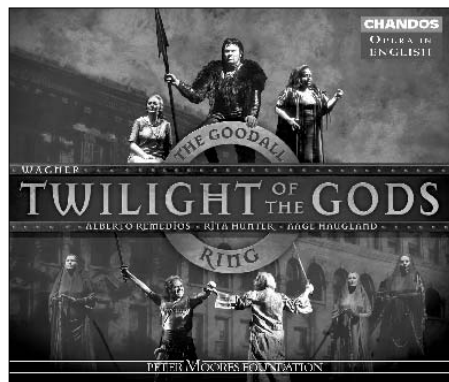
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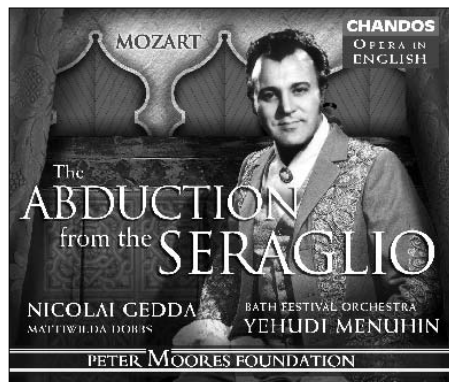
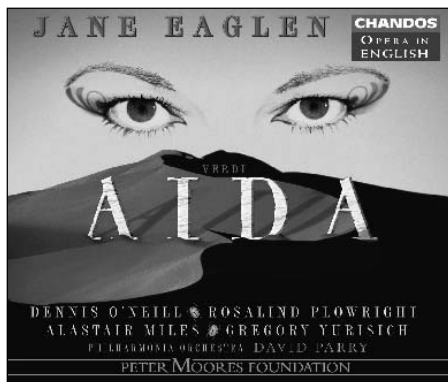
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GREAT OPERATIC ARIAS: Yvonne Kenny 2 - LSO/Hickox

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GREAT OPERATIC ARIAS: Yvonne Kenny 2 - LSO/Hickox

YVONNE KENNY 2

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|--|---|
| <p>1 George Frideric Handel
<i>from Rinaldo</i>
'Ah! Cruel man' 5:22</p> | <p>6 Franz Lehár
<i>from The Merry Widow</i>
'A Villia who liv'd by a cool forest glade'
with Geoffrey Mitchell Choir 5:32</p> |
| <p>2 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
<i>from The Marriage of Figaro</i>
Letter Duet
'How delightful 'tis to wander'
with Rebecca Evans soprano 3:33</p> | <p>7 Emmerich Kálmán
<i>from The Gypsy Princess</i>
'Where are they now?'
with Bruce Ford tenor 6:37</p> |
| <p>3 <i>from Così fan tutte</i> (All women are like that)
'Ah, forgive, my love, forgive me' 8:47</p> | <p>8 Richard Strauss
<i>from Capriccio</i>
Closing Scene
'Where is my brother?'
with Roderick Williams baritone 21:58</p> |
| <p>4 Richard Strauss
<i>from Arabella</i>
'He's not the one who is right for me'
with Rebecca Evans soprano 6:36</p> | <p>9 George Gershwin
<i>from The Show Is On</i>
'By Strauss' 2:39</p> |
| <p>5 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
<i>from Così fan tutte</i>
'By tomorrow we'll be together'
with Bruce Ford tenor 6:17</p> | <p>10 Ivor Novello
<i>from King's Rhapsody</i>
'Some day my heart will awake' 2:47</p> |
| <p>TT 70:14</p> | |

Yvonne Kenny soprano
London Symphony Orchestra
Richard Hickox

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