

CHAN 3127

GREAT OPERATIC ARIAS

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CHANDOS

OPERA IN
ENGLISH



Christine Brewer

soprano

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA conducted by DAVID PARRY

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

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On session:
Christine Brewer

Great Operatic Arias with Christine Brewer

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Richard Wagner (1813–1883) <i>from Tannhäuser</i> Elizabeth's Greeting (Dich teure Halle)		
[1] 'Great hall of song'	4:55	[p. 46]
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) <i>from Don Giovanni</i> Donna Anna's Vengeance Aria (Or sai chi l'onore)		
[2] 'Don Ottavio, I'm dying' – 'He threatened my honour' with Barry Banks tenor	6:14	[p. 46]
Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714–1787) <i>from Alceste</i> Alceste's Aria (Divinités du Styx)		
[3] 'Almighty gods of death!'	4:41	[p. 47]
Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826) <i>from Oberon</i> Reiza's recitative and aria (Ozean! Du Ungeheuer)		
[4] 'Ocean! Thou mighty monster' – 'Still I see thy billows flashing'	8:49	[p. 48]

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Sir Arthur Sullivan (1842–1900) <i>from The Golden Legend</i> Elsie's Song		
[5] 'The night is calm and cloudless' with Geoffrey Mitchell Choir	5:09	[p. 49]
Carl Maria von Weber <i>from Euryanthe</i> Recitative and Duet of Euryanthe and Eglantine (Unter ist mein Stern gegangen)		
[6] 'Ah, what have I done?' – 'Fading is the star that guides me' with Janice Watson soprano	3:59	[p. 49]
Emmerich Kálmán (1882–1953) <i>from Countess Maritza</i> Ensemble and Maritza's Entrance (Where is love's kingdom?)		
[7] 'Gypsy airs and joyful phrases' – 'Where is love's kingdom?' with Geoffrey Mitchell Choir	6:54	[p. 50]
Richard Rodgers (1902–1979) <i>from Carousel</i> 'You'll never walk alone'		
[8] 'You'll never walk alone' with Geoffrey Mitchell Choir	4:01	[p. 51]

Franz Lehár (1870–1948)

from Giuditta

Giuditta's Aria (Meine Lippen sie küssen so heiss)

[9] 'Why ever should it be'

with Geoffrey Mitchell Choir

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Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868)

from Stabat Mater (Inflamatus)

[10] 'Blessed virgin, may the flame of love'

with Geoffrey Mitchell Choir

4:19 [p. 52]

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Concert Aria 'Ah perfido!', Op. 65

[11] 'Ah! Treachery and falsehood! –

'Ah, my love, how can you leave me'

13:16 [p. 53]

Bob Merrill (1921–1998)

from Carnival

Lili's song (Mira – Can you imagine that?)

[12] 'I came on two buses and a train'

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TT 73:52

The gleaming, expressive voice of the American soprano Christine Brewer was such a revelation when she recorded *Fidelio* for Opera in English that we immediately scheduled this recital disc. Here, she reveals the beautifully considered balance of her lyric and dramatic singing in songs of many moods and from many eras, from Wagner to Richard Rodgers, from Weber to Lehár and from Gluck to Sullivan. Enjoy!

Peter Moores

August 2005

Sir Peter Moores examining an archaic Chinese bronze from the collection at Compton Verney

Great Operatic Arias

For record collectors, a programme such as this is rich in associations. Titles are connected with names, arias with singers, and a whole network of sonorities is set ringing by invocation of 'Ocean, thou mighty monster' or Elizabeth's 'Hall of song'. These have been traditionally the province of the most regal of soprano voices. On records they go back in time to the earliest years of all and to names retrieved from the nineteenth century. Anna Bahr-Mildenburg, the great dramatic soprano of the Vienna Opera in Mahler's time, recorded 'Ocean, thou mighty monster' in 1904. Lilli Lehmann, veteran of the first season at Bayreuth and principal Wagnerian soprano at Covent Garden and the Metropolitan in the 'Golden Age' of the 1890s, made a recording of Donna Anna's Vengeance aria and several other items heard here, which are titanic in spirit and often mightily impressive in voice and technique despite her advanced age. Frida Leider, adored by London audiences in the interwar years, also shone in that aria, and Kirsten Flagstad, her successor, was another who included 'Ocean, thou mighty monster' and Beethoven's

concert aria 'Ah! perfido' in her recorded repertoire. Nearer to modern times, we think of the cleaving tones of Birgit Nilsson or the richer ones of Jessye Norman in Elizabeth's Greeting. In fact a rare parade of vocal majesty passes before the eyes and ears of your collector's imagination, and in its wake is always the attendant hope of the line's continuance into our own day and age.

Christine Brewer has an eminent place among the heroic sopranos of our time. Exceptionally, her voice possesses the ideal combination of power and firmness, radiance and breadth. She has also spirit to match. A great warmth of feeling and sense of dramatic conviction are hers, and these extend to the quieter, intimate expressions of emotion as to the moments of grandeur generally regarded as marking the summit of the heroic singer's art. In terms of repertoire, that summit is usually represented by the two great Wagnerian roles of Isolde and Brünnhilde. A highlight of the 2005 Edinburgh Festival (still a few months ahead at the time of writing) is confidently expected to be the concert performance of *Tristan and Isolde* in

which she sings the heroine to Petra Lang's Brangaene and Christian Franz's Tristan. Already she has been described in the American press as the singer who 'should be the Isolde and Brünnhilde everywhere'. There is of course a danger in that 'everywhere': as Flagstad and Lauritz Melchior found, when a singer has the monopoly of preference in certain roles, those roles in turn tend to monopolise the singer. The Wagner-specialist has to leave a way out.

The present programme makes it clear that Christine Brewer has plenty going for her outside Wagner. She has in fact a great deal more, for she is also an admired concert artist, with (particularly) a large repertoire of Schubert Lieder. In opera, among her notable successes have been Britten's *Gloriana* and Barber's *Vanessa*. And it is always reassuring to find, as here, that Mozart has played a large part in a singer's career. Brewer made both her New York and her London debuts as the Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and for such a role it is essential that the singer should be in full possession of the singerly virtues of flexibility, pure tone, steady production and genuine legato. As we hardly need telling, the cultivation of sheer volume and the repeated singing of roles most strenuously requiring it

will all too often be pursued at the expense of one or all these virtues. Mozart insists on their preservation.

He is represented here by the duet, recitative and aria from **Don Giovanni** (track [2]). Donna Anna is now the Mozartean role with which Christine Brewer is most closely associated, the role (for instance) of an earlier success in Edinburgh, under Sir Charles Mackerras in 1995. The disposition of the three women's parts in *Don Giovanni* has come into question in recent years. It used to be clear enough: Zerlina (now sometimes claimed for the mezzo) was always a light soprano, even a soubrette, Donna Elvira a standard lyric role and Donna Anna the heavy. Such was the casting of a famous revival at Covent Garden under Bruno Walter in 1926: Elisabeth Schumann sang Zerlina, Lotte Lehmann Elvira and Frida Leider Anna. In the event it was felt that Lehmann and Leider both had such a powerful stage-presence that they seemed to cancel each other out. But it would have been unthinkable for them to have exchanged roles, just as it was the invariable arrangement in those years for Lehmann to play Sieglinde to Leider's Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*. Modern conductors and producers have been more inclined to ask, in

Don Giovanni at least, why this should be so. Surely Anna is the gentler, more sympathetic character, Elvira the termagant?

But no discussion of characters in opera gets very far without reference to their music, and in this instance it is Donna Anna's Vengeance aria that settles the matter. The powerful sweep of the phrases, the intensity of angry emotion (ennobled by restraint) and above all the effect of those climactic high 'A's call for a voice of heroic volume and quality: whatever else the role involves, this requires grandeur, not only of style but of vocal capacity.

The difference between expectations of that capacity in Mozart's time and our own is perhaps impossible to gauge at all accurately at this date. We know that orchestras and, for the most part, theatres were smaller then, but certainly the power of a voice was a factor in its assessment and had been from the first phases of operatic history. The early treatises on vocal art make much of a singer's power to swell and then diminish on a note, the so-called *mesa di voce*. The famous castrati, Senesino, Carestini and Farinelli for example, were all praised for their resources of power and fullness. All the same, these do not appear to have been top priorities. Beauty of tone and technical skill ranked higher, and there is little

sign of volume as a cult in itself till well on in the nineteenth century.

Even Mozart's sopranos seem to have been remarkable for range and agility rather than power, and of Teresa Saporiti, the first Anna, it was reported that 'her voice is somewhat small and she neglects expression in recitatives'. Some years after the premiere of *Don Giovanni* she became *prima buffa assoluta* and specialised in roles such as Rosina in Paisiello's *Barber of Seville*. So much for the notion, dear to *cognoscenti*, that the 'creator' of a role will provide a reliable index of the composer's wishes; or perhaps if anything is to be learned in this instance it is that Mozart set the highest store by technical proficiency, with which Saporiti was said to be well endowed.

Sometimes a new century does mark a new era, though there seems little reason why it should. In 1800 a prime influence in opera's progress was still the reformer, Gluck. The premiere of his *Alceste* dates back to 1767, but for many years afterwards he and Mozart were respected by serious musicians as the composers who showed the way ahead for opera. For singers this meant that skill in ornamentation lost its dominant place, which was increasingly taken over by expressiveness.

Alceste's aria (track [3]), usually known under its French title, 'Divinités du Styx', is a good example of the noble style, plain but forcible, suiting the voice of what we now recognise as the heroic, dramatic soprano. And it is not far from that to Beethoven and Weber.

Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient was not Beethoven's first Leonore (she was only one year old when the original version had its premiere in 1805). In 1822, however, at the age of eighteen, she transformed the role, and to some extent the fundamental concept of the opera singer. She was, perhaps, the first distinctly modern soprano. With her, it seems, dramatic truth came first, and the identity of the dramatic soprano gained definition. She was also famous for her singing of Weber and provides the link forward to Wagner, becoming the first Adriana in *Rienzi*, then Senta in *The Flying Dutchman* and Venus in *Tannhäuser*.

The present recital plots, as it were, the journey to Wagner, but stops at *Tannhäuser* (track [1]), not going beyond into what are generally regarded as the ultimate reaches of the heroic repertoire, the great roles of Brünnhilde and Isolde. The stages on the journey are Beethoven's concert aria, 'Ah! perfido' (track [11]), Weber's 'Ocean' aria from

Oberon (track [4]), the scene from *Euryanthe* (track [6]), and two interpolations from what might seem unlikely composers, Rossini and Sullivan. The Rossini (track [10]) bears several marks of the school of singing which these other composers, from Beethoven to Wagner, most resolutely supersede: the decorative turns and trills, the encouragement to the singer to exhibit her technical skill as well as the sheer naked power of her top C. It is clearly written for a big voice, and when given with full orchestra and chorus there is an elemental thrill, almost like Puccini's *Turandot*, in hearing the soprano voice cleave and ring at full volume. Perhaps, then, it is not so surprising after all to find the aria from Rossini's *Stabat Mater* included. But Sullivan's *The Golden Legend* (track [5]) will surely be an unexpected item in the programme – for all but a few record collectors with long memories. They will recall, perhaps, an HMV brown-label 78 made in 1930, on which, with the chorus and orchestra of the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, conducted by John Barbirolli, Florence Austral sings both solos, with her Brünnhilde-voice heard in its full splendour. So there is a precedent.

That probably cannot be claimed for the remaining four tracks in this recital – though,

come to think about it, they might have found their way at encore-time into a programme with Birgit Nilsson. The operettas of Lehár and Kálmán (**Countess Maritza**, track [7]) are of course vocally from the same tradition as the nineteenth-century operas: they require and reward the allure of an ample voice and a well-preserved singing-line. **Giuditta** (track [9]), in particular, as Lehár's nearest approach to the operatic style, has attracted many sopranos not normally associated with the sway of a seductive waltz tune. The American musicals are a kind of extension of the older operetta tradition, nearer to the modern free-and-easy style but still broadly melodic, even capable of a certain grandeur when sung by a big voice, as here. The homely girl from **Mira** (track [12]) may be somewhat of an exception to find in the company of Alceste, Donna Anna and the rest of their dramatic tribe, but might not Brünnhilde herself, if her normal supporting group of nine women's voices were enlarged, as here, into a full operatic chorus fit to fill a football stadium, find 'You'll never walk alone' (track [8]) a fine song for singing...?

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A note from the singer

Every year our little Shawnee High School put on a big major musical, and as a seventeen-year-old I played the Mother Abbess in *The Sound of Music*, singing 'Climb every mountain', which I still often use as an encore piece.

'Mira' is something I've been singing for about fifteen years, again, quite often as an encore. The sentiments expressed by this young girl in Bob Merrill's *Carnival* are so similar to my own... growing up in a small town, and carrying those memories along wherever I go. I grew up in a town of 500 (Grand Tower, Illinois) and now live in a BIG town of 3,500 (Lebanon, Illinois). So many times when I'm travelling to cities like London or New York or Paris, I think back on what it was like to grow up in a town where 'everybody knew my name...'

© Christine Brewer

American soprano **Christine Brewer** was born in Illinois and began her professional career with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, with whom she has performed Ellen Orford, Donna Anna and the title roles in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Haydn's *Armida*. Other appearances



have included Countess Almaviva (New York City Opera and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden), and Donna Anna (Edinburgh Festival under Sir Charles Mackerras and in London, New York and Florida). She has sung Gluck's *Iphigenie en Tauride* in Madrid, Leonora (*Fidelio*) with the St Paul Chamber Orchestra, Weber's *Oberon* with Richard Hickox in London and Strauss' *Die Aegyptische Helena* in Santa Fe. She sang her first Isolde with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Donald Runnicles, Britten's *Gloriana* with Richard Hickox at the Aldeburgh Festival, and Chrysothemis (*Elektra*) with the Cleveland Orchestra and Frans Welser-Möst. She has achieved international renown for her performances of Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos* having sung the role for English National Opera, Opéra de Lyon (in Lyon and Paris), the Santa Fe Festival and in her debut at the Metropolitan Opera under James Levine.

In concert Christine Brewer appears with the major American and British Orchestras under Sir Roger Norrington, Michael Tilson-

Thomas, Kurt Masur, John Adams, Christoph von Dohnányi, Raymond Leppard, Mark Wigglesworth, Andrew Litton, John Nelson, Sir Neville Marriner, Wolfgang Sawallisch and Ivan Fischer. Her recordings include the title role in *Fidelio* as part of Chandos' Opera in English series, Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* and Dvořák's *Tě Deum* with Robert Shaw, *Don Giovanni* under Sir Charles Mackerras, Barber's *Vanessa* under Leonard Slatkin, and she appears in Graham Johnson's complete Schubert Edition.

Recent concert engagements have included gala concerts at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (under Bernard Haitink), Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero* at the Monnaie, Brussels (under Antonio Pappano), and she has forged strong links with the BBC Proms, with performances including Britten's War Requiem under Jane Glover, Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* under Sir Andrew Davis, Wagner's *Die Walküre* and Schönberg's *Gurrelieder* under Donald Runnicles, and Mahler's Eighth Symphony under Sir Simon Rattle.

One of the world's great orchestras, the **Philharmonia Orchestra** is now in its sixth season with renowned German maestro

Christoph von Dohnányi as Principal Conductor. That post was first held by Otto Klemperer, and the Orchestra has since had important collaborations with Lorin Maazel (as Associate Principal Conductor), Riccardo Muti (as Principal Conductor and Music Director), Giuseppe Sinopoli (as Music Director) and, currently, Kurt Sanderling (as Conductor Emeritus), Vladimir Ashkenazy (as Conductor Laureate) and Sir Charles Mackerras (as Principal Guest Conductor), besides such eminent figures as Wilhelm Furtwängler, Richard Strauss, Arturo Toscanini, Guido Cantelli, Herbert von Karajan and Carlo Maria Giulini. It continues to engage world-class conductors and soloists, and attracts Europe's most talented young players to join its orchestral ranks.

Resident Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall, it maintains a central position in British musical life also through regional residencies which provide an ideal opportunity to expand a dynamic educational and community-based programme. Winner of numerous awards, it has garnered unanimous critical acclaim for its innovative programming policy, at the heart of which is a commitment to performing and commissioning new music by today's leading composers.

An increasing number of the Orchestra's concerts are being broadcast by BBC Radio 3, including its annual performance at the BBC Proms. As the world's most recorded symphony orchestra, with over 1000 releases to its credit, among these a number of television and feature film soundtracks, the Philharmonia Orchestra enjoys a worldwide reputation. The discography includes, for Opera Rara, several recital discs as well as eleven complete operas, and for Chandos, in the Opera in English series sponsored by the Peter Moores Foundation, *The Thieving Magpie*, *Wozzeck*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Elixir of Love*, *Lucia of Lammermoor*, *Faust*, *Carmen*, *Aida*, *La Bohème*, *Madam Butterfly*, *Turandot*, the award-winning *Tosca* and solo recital albums of operatic arias with Bruce Ford, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny and John Tomlinson. The Philharmonia Orchestra continues to consolidate its international renown through regular tours and through recent prestigious residencies at the Châtelet Théâtre Musical in Paris, the Megaron in Athens and the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York.

David Parry studied with Sergiu Celibidache and began his career as Sir John Pritchard's



assistant. He made his debut with English Music Theatre, then became a staff conductor at Städtische Bühnen, Dortmund and at Opera North. He was Music Director of Opera 80 from 1983 to 1987 and since 1992 has been the founding Music Director of Almeida Opera.

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

He is a frequent visitor to Spain where he has given concerts with most of the major Spanish orchestras. He conducted the Spanish premiere of *Peter Grimes* in Madrid and in 1996 the first Spanish production of *The Rake's Progress*. He has appeared in Germany, Switzerland, and The Netherlands, at the Pesaro Festival in Italy, the Hong Kong International Festival, in Japan with

a tour of *Carmen*, and in Mexico with the UNAM Symphony Orchestra. Recent new productions he has conducted include *Fidelio* at the New Zealand Festival, *Lucia di Lammermoor* at New Israeli Opera and *Don Giovanni* at Staatsoper Hannover.

His work in the recording studio includes the BBC Television production of Marschner's *Der Vampyr* and twenty-eight complete opera recordings under the sponsorship of the Peter Moores Foundation. Among these are numerous discs for the Opera Rara label which have won several awards, including the Belgian Prix Cecilia for Donizetti's *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*. For Chandos he has conducted a series of recitals of operatic arias – with Sir Thomas Allen, Bruce Ford, Alan Opie, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny, John Tomlinson, Barry Banks, Della Jones and Andrew Shore – as well as *Fidelio*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *A Masked Ball*, *Idomeneo*, *Carmen*, *The Thieving Magpie*, *Don Giovanni*, *Don Pasquale*, *The Elixir of Love*, *Lucia of Lammermoor*, *Ernani*, *Il trovatore*, *Aida*, *Faust*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *La bohème*, *Turandot*, the award-winning *Tosca* and highlights from *Der Rosenkavalier*, all in association with the Peter Moores Foundation.

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

British philanthropist Sir Peter Moores established the Peter Moores Foundation in 1964 to realise his charitable aims and, to fulfill one of these, the Compton Verney House Trust in 1993 to create a new art gallery in the country. Through his charities he has disbursed more than £93 million to a wide variety of arts, environmental and social causes 'to get things done and open doors for people'.

Sir Peter's philanthropic work began with his passion for opera: in his twenties he 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.

Today, the Peter Moores Foundation supports talented young singers with annual scholarships awarded through the Royal Northern College of Music, has made it possible for Chandos Records to issue the world's largest catalogue of operas recorded in English translation, and enabled Opera Rara to record rare *bel canto* repertoire which would otherwise remain inaccessible to the general public.

In live performance, the Foundation has encouraged the creation of new work and schemes to attract new audiences, financed the publication of scores, especially for world premieres of modern operas, and enabled rarely heard works to be staged by British opera companies and festivals.

Projects supported by the Foundation to help the young have ranged from a scheme to encourage young Afro-Caribbeans 'stay at school' for further education, to the endowment

of a Faculty Directorship and Chair of Undergraduate Management Studies at Oxford University (providing the lead donation which paved the way for the development of the Said Business School).

In 1993 the Foundation bought Compton Verney, a Grade 1 Georgian mansion in Warwickshire, designed by Robert Adam, with grounds by Capability Brown. Compton Verney House Trust was set up by Sir Peter to transform the derelict mansion into a world-class art gallery that would provide an especially welcoming environment for the 'first-time' gallery visitor. The gallery, which houses six permanent collections, a Learning Centre for all ages, and facilities for major visiting exhibitions, was opened in March 2004 by HRH the Prince of Wales. The Compton Verney website can be found at: www.comptonverney.org.uk

Sir Peter Moores was born in Lancashire and educated at Eton College and Christ Church, Oxford. He was a student at the Vienna Academy of Music, where he produced the Austrian premiere of Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, and worked as an assistant producer with Viennese artists in Naples, Geneva and Rome, before returning to England in 1957 to join his father's business, Littlewoods. He was Vice-Chairman of Littlewoods in 1976, Chairman from 1977 to 1980 and remained a director until 1993.

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 a Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire by HM the Queen. He was appointed CBE in 1991 and received a Knighthood in 2003 for his charitable services to the arts.

Große Opernarien

Für Plattensammler ist ein Programm wie dieses reich an Assoziationen. Titel werden mit Namen in Verbindung gebracht, Arien mit Sängern, und die Erwähnung von "Ocean, thou mighty monster" oder Elisabeths "Hall of song" versetzen ein ganzes klingendes Netzwerk in Schwingungen. Schon immer waren diese Titel die Domäne der majestätischsten Sopranstimmen. Tonträgeraufnahmen dieser Melodien reichen in die früheste Zeit zurück bis hin zu Namen, die noch im neunzehnten Jahrhundert zu Hause sind. Anna Bahr-Mildenburg, die große dramatische Sopranistin der Wiener Oper in der Ära Gustav Mahlers, machte 1904 eine Aufnahme von "Ocean, thou mighty monster". Lilli Lehmann, die Veteranin der allerersten Spielzeit in Bayreuth und erste Wagner-Sopranistin in Covent Garden und an der Metropolitan Opera im "Goldenen Zeitalter" der 1890er Jahre, nahm Donna Annas Rachearie und verschiedene andere hier ebenfalls eingespielte Titel auf, die trotz des fortgeschrittenen Alters der Interpretin von titanischem Geist zeugen und in Stimme und Technik meist noch ausgesprochen

eindrucksvoll sind. Die vom Londoner Publikum in den Jahren zwischen den Weltkriegen gefeierte Frida Leider glänzte ebenfalls mit dieser Arie, und auch ihre Nachfolgerin Kirsten Flagstad wählte "Ocean, thou mighty monster" sowie Beethovens Konzertarie "Ah! perfido" für ihr Schallplattenrepertoire aus. Näher an der Gegenwart denken wir an die durchdringenden Töne einer Birgit Nilsson oder an den volleren Klang von Jessye Norman in Elisabeths Gruß. Tatsächlich zieht eine einzigartige Parade stimmlicher Majestäten am geistigen Auge und Ohr unseres Sammlers vorüber, in deren Nachhut auch immer die Hoffnung mitzieht, daß diese Reihe sich in unsere eigene Gegenwart fortsetzen möge.

Christine Brewer nimmt unter den heroischen Sopranen unserer Zeit eine herausragende Stellung ein. Ihre Stimme hat die einzigartige, ideale Kombination von Kraft und Festigkeit, Ausstrahlung und Tragfähigkeit. Außerdem verfügt sie über das hierzu passende Temperament. Sie nennt eine große emotionale Wärme und ein Gespür für überzeugende Dramatik ihr eigen, die sich

sowohl im stilleren, intimeren Ausdruck von Gefühlen äußern als auch in den Momenten der Erhabenheit, von denen man gemeinhin annimmt, daß sie die künstlerischen Höhepunkte des heroischen Sängers ausmachen. Im Sopran-Repertoire finden sich diese Höhepunkte gewöhnlich in den beiden großen Wagner-Rollen der Isolde und Brünnhilde. Ein Glanzpunkt des diesjährigen (2005) Edinburgh Festivals wird sicherlich die konzertante Aufführung von *Tristan und Isolde* sein, in der Brewer neben Petra Lang als Brangäne und Christian Franz in der Rolle des Tristan die Titelheldin singt. In der amerikanischen Presse wurde Brewer bereits als die Sängerin beschrieben, die "immer und überall die Rollen der Isolde und der Brünnhilde übernehmen sollte". In diesem "immer und überall" liegt natürlich auch eine Gefahr, wie Flagstad und Lauritz Melchior erfahren mußten – wenn ein Sänger auf bestimmte Rollen ein Monopol hat, so pflegen diese Rollen umgekehrt auch den Sänger zu monopolisieren. Der Wagner-Spezialist muß sich in solchen Fällen einen Ausweg offenhalten.

Das vorliegende Programm veranschaulicht, daß auch außerhalb des Wagner-Repertoires vieles für Christine Brewer spricht. Sie ist in der Tat sehr vielseitig, denn sie hat sich auch

als gefeierte Konzertinterpretin einen Namen gemacht – speziell mit einem außergewöhnlich großen Repertoire an Schubert-Liedern. In der Oper zählen zu ihren bemerkenswerten Erfolgen auch Britten's *Gloriana* und Barbers *Vanessa*. Und wie immer ist es auch hier beruhigend, daß Mozart in der Karriere dieser Sängerin eine wichtige Rolle gespielt hat. Brewer feierte sowohl ihr New Yorker als auch ihr Londoner Debüt in der Rolle der Gräfin in *Die Hochzeit des Figaro*, und für eine solche Rolle ist es von essentieller Bedeutung, daß die Sängerin Qualitäten wie Flexibilität, einen reinen Ton, eine ausgewogene Stimmgebung und ein echtes Legato perfekt beherrscht. Es braucht kaum erwähnt zu werden, daß die Kultivierung bloßer Lautstärke und die wiederholte Darbietung von Rollen, die diese Stimmgewalt unentwegt erfordern, nur allzu oft auf Kosten einer oder aller dieser Qualitäten geschieht. Mozart jedoch verlangt ihre Bewahrung.

In der vorliegenden Einspielung ist der Komponist mit dem Duett, dem Rezitativ und der Arie aus *Don Giovanni* vertreten (Band [2]). Die Donna Anna wird unter den Mozartschen Rollen am engsten mit Christine Brewer in Verbindung gebracht; so feierte sie

in dieser Rolle zum Beispiel 1995 in Edinburgh einen frühen Erfolg unter Sir Charles Mackerras. Die Klassifizierung der drei Frauenrollen in *Don Giovanni* ist in den letzten Jahren neu überdacht worden. Die Situation schien eindeutig genug – Zerlina war immer ein heller Sopran, ja sogar eine Soubrette (heute fällt sie gelegentlich dem Mezzosopran zu), die Donna Elvira war die standardmäßige lyrische Rolle und Donna Anna galt als der klassische große Sopran. Dem entsprach zum Beispiel auch die Besetzung einer berühmten Inszenierung an Covent Garden unter Bruno Walter im Jahr 1926: Elisabeth Schumann sang die Zerlina, Lotte Lehmann die Elvira und Frida Leider die Anna. Tatsächlich empfand man, daß sowohl die Lehmann als auch die Leider eine solch kraftvolle Bühnenpräsenz hatten, daß sie sich gegenseitig in den Schatten zu stellen schienen. Sie ihre Rollen vertauschen zu lassen, wäre jedoch undenkbar gewesen, ebenso wie in jener Zeit in der *Walküre* grundsätzlich Lotte Lehmann die Sieglinde und Frida Leider die Brünnhilde übernahm. Erst die modernen Dirigenten und Regisseure tendieren zumindest in Bezug auf *Don Giovanni* zu der Frage, warum das eigentlich so ist. Sicherlich ist doch Anna die sanftere,

sympathischere Figur und Elvira der Hausdrache?

Doch keine Diskussion um die Typisierung von Opernrollen kommt sehr weit, ohne deren Musik zu berücksichtigen, und da ist es in diesem Falle Donna Annas Rachearie, die die Sache entscheidet. Der kraftvolle Schwung der einzelnen Phrasen, die Intensität des (durch Zurückhaltung gleichsam geadelten) Ärgers und vor allem die Wirkung der klimaktischen hohen "A"s verlangen eine Stimme, die in Tragfähigkeit wie Qualität gleichermaßen heroisch ist – was immer die Rolle sonst noch erfordert, hier ist Grandezza nicht nur im Stil, sondern auch im Stimmvermögen gefragt.

Es ist gegenwärtig wahrscheinlich unmöglich, den Unterschied zwischen den Erwartungen, die man heute und denen, die man zu Mozarts Zeiten an dieses Stimmvermögen knüpfte, auch nur annähernd zu bestimmen. Wir wissen, daß die Orchester und meist auch die Theater damals kleiner waren, trotzdem aber galt sicherlich schon damals und eigentlich seit den Anfängen der Oper die Kraft einer Stimme als wesentlicher Faktor für ihre Bewertung. Frühe Abhandlungen über die Gesangkunst legen großen Wert auf die Fähigkeit eines Sängers,

auf einer einzelnen Note den Ton anschwellen und sodann wieder leiser werden zu lassen, eine als *messa die voce* bezeichnete Technik. Die berühmten Kastraten Senesino, Carestini und Farinelli zum Beispiel wurden alle für ihr Kraftpotential und ihre volle Stimme gepriesen. Zugleich aber scheinen dies nicht die wichtigsten Qualitäten gewesen zu sein. Schönheit des Tons und technische Fähigkeiten wurden höher bewertet, und bis weit ins 19. Jahrhundert hinein gibt es kaum Anzeichen dafür, daß das Stimmvolumen als solches zum Kult wurde.

Selbst Mozarts Soprane scheinen schon eher wegen ihres Stimmumfangs und ihrer Geläufigkeit als wegen ihrer Kraft aufgefallen zu sein, und über Teresa Saporiti, die erste Anna, berichtete man, "ihre Stimme ist recht klein und in den Rezitativen mangelt es ihr an Ausdruckskraft". Einige Jahre nach der Premiere von *Don Giovanni* wurde sie *prima buffa assoluta* und spezialisierte sich auf Rollen wie die der Rosina in Paisiellos *Barbier von Sevilla*. Soviel also zu der von Kennern gehegten Vorstellung, daß der "Schöpfer" einer Rolle verlässliche Angaben zu den Wünschen des Komponisten liefern wird; wenn in diesem Fall überhaupt etwas zu lernen ist, so vielleicht nur, daß Mozart vor allem auf technisches

Können Wert legte, mit dem die Saporiti angeblich bestens ausgestattet war. Gelegentlich beginnt mit einem neuen Jahrhundert auch ein neues Zeitalter, selbst wenn es kaum einen Grund gibt, warum dies so sein sollte. Im Jahr 1800 ging ein wesentlicher Einfluß auf die Entwicklung der Oper immer noch von dem Neuerer Gluck aus. Die Erstaufführung seiner *Alceste* fand bereits 1767 statt, aber noch viele Jahre nach diesem Zeitpunkt galten Gluck und Mozart bei ernsthaften Musikern als diejenigen Komponisten, die der Oper den Weg in die Zukunft wiesen. Für Sänger bedeutete dies, daß die Kunst der Ornamentierung ihre beherrschende Stellung verlor, die nun zunehmend von der Expressivität eingenommen wurde. *Alcestes Arie* (Band 3), die allgemein unter ihrem französischen Titel "Divinités du Styx" bekannt ist, ist ein gutes Beispiel des noblen Stils, der einfach und zugleich kraftvoll ist und zu der Stimme paßt, die wir heute als den heroischen, dramatischen Sopran einstufen. Und von hier ist es nicht mehr weit zu Beethoven und Weber.

Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient war nicht Beethovens erste Leonore – als 1805 die ursprüngliche Fassung zum ersten Mal

aufgeführt wurde, war sie erst ein Jahr alt. 1822 jedoch transformierte die Achtzehnjährige nicht nur diese Rolle, sondern in gewisser Hinsicht gleich auch das grundlegende Konzept des Opernsängers. Sie war vielleicht die erste ausgesprochen moderne Sopranistin. Für sie, so scheint es, stand die dramatische Wahrhaftigkeit an erster Stelle, und die Identität des dramatischen Soprans begann, Konturen zu gewinnen. Auch für ihre Interpretation der Kompositionen Webers war sie berühmt, und zugleich stellte sie eine Verbindung in die Zukunft her, zu Wagner – sie war die erste Adriana in *Rienzi*, sodann die Senta im *Fliegenden Holländer* und schließlich die Venus im *Tannhäuser*.

Das hier eingespielte Recital plant gewissermaßen die Reise zu Wagner, endet aber bei *Tannhäuser* (Band [1]) und begibt sich somit nicht in die extremen Gefilde des heroischen Repertoires mit den großen Rollen der Brünnhilde und Isolde. Die Stationen auf dieser Reise sind Beethovens Kozertarie „**Ah! perfido**“ (Band [11]), Webers „Meeres“-Arie aus *Oberon* (Band [4]) und die Szene aus *Euryanthe* (Band [8]), unterbrochen von zwei Stücken von vielleicht unerwartet erscheinenden Komponisten – Rossini und

Sullivan. Der Rossini (Band [10]) enthält einige Merkmale jener Gesangsschule, die diese anderen Komponisten, von Beethoven bis Wagner, ganz entschieden überwunden haben – die dekorativen Doppelschläge und Triller, mit denen die Sängerin ermutigt wird, ihre technischen Fähigkeiten sowie auch die schiere Kraft ihres hohen C zur Schau zu stellen. Die Arie ist eindeutig für eine große Stimme geschrieben, und sofern sie mit vollem Orchester und Chor gegeben wird, stellt sich ähnlich wie in Puccinis *Turandot* beim Hörer eine elementare Erregung ein, wenn die Sopranstimme mit vollem Volumen alles zu zerschmettern scheint. Somit ist es vielleicht doch nicht so überraschend, daß die Arie aus Rossinis *Stabat Mater* in diese Sammlung aufgenommen wurde. Sullivans **The Golden Legend** (Band [5]) ist allerdings sicherlich für jeden eine unerwartete Nummer in diesem Programm – mit Ausnahme einiger weniger Plattensammler mit sehr gutem Gedächtnis. Denn die erinnern sich vielleicht an eine 78er HMV brown-label Einspielung aus den 1930er Jahren, auf der Florence Austral die beiden Solos mit der vollen Ausdruckskraft ihrer Brünnhilde-Stimme singt, begleitet vom Chor und Orchester der Royal Opera in Covent Garden unter der Leitung von

John Barbiroli. Es gibt also auch hierfür ein Vorbild.

Dies gilt wohl kaum für die verbleibenden vier Nummern dieses Recitals – obwohl sie, wenn man es recht bedenkt, als Zugaben ihren Weg in ein Programm mit Birgit Nilsson gefunden haben könnten. Die Operetten von Lehár und Kálmán (**Gräfin Maritza**, Band [7]) gehören stimmlich natürlich derselben Tradition an wie die Opern des 19. Jahrhunderts – sie verlangen und versprechen die Attraktion einer üppigen Stimme und einer getreu wiedergegebenen Gesangslinie. **Giuditta** (Band [9]) insbesondere, mit der Lehár sich dem großen Opernstil am ehesten nähert, hat viele Sopranistinnen angezogen, die man sonst kaum mit dem Wiegen einer verführerischen Walzermelodie in Verbindung brächte. Die amerikanischen Musicals sind eine Art Weiterentwicklung der älteren Operettentradition; sie stehen dem freien und leichten modernen Stil schon näher, sind aber immer noch weitgehend melodisch und zu einer gewissen Grandezza fähig, wenn sie wie hier von einer großen Stimme gesungen werden. Das unscheinbare Mädchen aus **Mira** (Band [12]) mag in der Gesellschaft von Alceste, Donna Anna und dem Rest

dieser dramatischen Versammlung eher eine Ausnahme darstellen, aber könnte es nicht selbst Brünnhilde gefallen – wenn ihre übliche Verstärkungsgruppe von neun Frauenstimmen wie hier zu einem vollen Opernchor erweitert würde, dessen Klang ein ganzes Fußballstadion zu füllen imstande wäre –, ein Lied wie „You’ll never walk alone“ (Band [8]) zu singen?

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Anmerkungen der Sängerin

Jedes Jahr führte unsere kleine High School in Shawnee ein großes Musical auf, und als Siebzehnjährige spielte ich die Äbtissin in *The Sound of Music* und sang „Climb every mountain“, ein Stück, das ich noch heute oft als Zugabe auswähle.

„Mira“ singe ich auch schon seit etwa fünfzehn Jahren, häufig als Zugabe. Die Gefühle, die dieses junge Mädchen in Bob Merrills *Carnival* zum Ausdruck bringt, sind meinen eigenen so ähnlich ... – auch ich bin in einem kleinen Dorf groß geworden und nehme diese Erinnerungen immer mit, ganz gleich wohin es mich verschlägt. Ich bin in einem Dorf mit 500 Einwohnern (Grand Tower, Illinois) aufgewachsen und lebe heute in einem GROSSEN Ort mit 3500

Einwohnern (Lebanon, Illinois). Häufig, wenn ich in Städte wie London oder New York oder Paris reise, erinnere ich mich wie es war, in einem Ort zu leben, wo "jeder meinen Namen kannte ...".

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Übersetzung: Stephanie Wollny

Die amerikanische Sopranistin **Christine Brewer** stammt aus Illinois und begann ihre künstlerische Laufbahn am Opera Theatre von Saint Louis, wo sie die Ellen Orford und Donna Anna sowie die Titelrollen in *Ariadne auf Naxos* und Haydns *Armida* gesungen hat. Weitere Auftritte hatte sie als Gräfin Almaviva an der New York City Opera und der Royal Opera in Covent Garden sowie als Donna Anna auf dem Edinburgh Festival unter Sir Charles Mackerras und in London, New York und Florida. Sie hat Glucks *Iphigenie en Tauride* in Madrid gesungen, Leonore (*Fidelio*) mit dem St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Webers *Oberon* unter Richard Hickox in London und Strauss' *Die Ägyptische Helena* in Santa Fe. Ihre erste Isolde sang sie mit dem BBC Symphony Orchestra unter Donald Runnicles, sodann Britten's *Gloriana* unter Richard Hickox auf dem Aldeburgh Festival und Chrysothemis

(*Elektra*) mit dem Cleveland Orchestra unter Frans Welser-Möst. Für ihre Darbietung in *Ariadne auf Naxos* erlangte sie internationalen Ruhm; inzwischen hat sie die Rolle an der English National Opera, der Opéra de Lyon (in Lyon und Paris), auf dem Santa Fe Festival und bei ihrem Debüt an der Metropolitan Opera unter James Levine gesungen.

Auf dem Konzertpodium tritt Christine Brewer mit den großen amerikanischen und britischen Orchestern unter Sir Roger Norrington, Michael Tilson-Thomas, Kurt Masur, John Adams, Christoph von Dohnányi, Raymond Leppard, Mark Wigglesworth, Andrew Litton, John Nelson, Sir Neville Marriner, Wolfgang Sawallisch und Ivan Fischer auf. Ihre Diskographie umfaßt die Titelrolle in *Fidelio* für die Chandos-Reihe "Opera in English", Janáček's *Glagolitischer Messe* und Dvořák's *Te Deum* mit Robert Shaw, *Don Giovanni* unter Sir Charles Mackerras und Barbers *Vanessa* unter Leonard Slatkin; außerdem wirkt sie an Graham Johnsons Schubert-Gesamteinspielung mit.

Konzertverpflichtungen umfaßten in jüngerer Zeit die Galakonzerte am Royal Opera House in Covent Garden (unter Bernard Haitink) und Dallapiccolas *Il Prigioniero* an La Monnaie in Brüssel (unter

Antonio Pappano); außerdem hat sie enge Verbindungen zu den BBC Proms geknüpft, mit Aufführungen unter anderem von Britten's *War Requiem* unter Jane Glover, Janáček's *Glagolitischer Messe* unter Sir Andrew Davis, Wagners *Walküre* und Schönbergs *Gurrelieder* unter Donald Runnicles sowie Mahlers Achter Sinfonie unter Sir Simon Rattle.

Das **Philharmonia Orchestra**, eines der großen Orchester der Welt, steht nun bereits im sechsten Jahr unter der Leitung seines berühmten deutschen Chefdirigenten Christoph von Dohnányi. Er setzt eine Tradition fort, die mit Otto Klemperer begann und über Lorin Maazel (Erster Gastdirigent), Riccardo Muti (Chefdirigent und Musikalischer Leiter), Giuseppe Sinopoli (Musikalischer Leiter) bis zu Kurt Sanderling (Emeritierter Dirigent), Vladimir Ashkenazy (Ehrendirigent) und Sir Charles Mackerras (Hauptgastdirigent) führt, aber auch die Zusammenarbeit mit Wilhelm Furtwängler, Richard Strauss, Arturo Toscanini, Guido Cantelli, Herbert von Karajan und Carlo Maria Giulini einbezog. Das Orchester verpflichtet weiterhin Gastdirigenten und Solisten von Weltrang, während einige der größten europäischen Nachwuchstalente in

seine Reihen aufgenommen werden.

Das Philharmonia Orchestra ist in der Royal Festival Hall ansässig und nimmt eine zentrale Position im Musikleben Großbritanniens ein, nicht nur durch seine Londoner Konzerte, sondern auch durch feste Kontakte mit Aufführungsstätten in anderen Teilen des Landes, die eine ideale Gelegenheit für die Erweiterung seines dynamischen und bevölkerungsnahen musikpädagogischen Programms bieten. Das Orchester ist mit zahlreichen Preisen ausgezeichnet worden und hat beispiellose kritische Unterstützung für seine innovative Programmpolitik gewonnen, die in ihrem Kern der Bestellung und Darbietung neuer Musik von führenden Komponisten unserer Zeit verpflichtet ist.

Die Konzerte des Orchesters werden immer häufiger von BBC Radio 3 übertragen, nicht zuletzt im Rahmen der jährlichen BBC Proms. Mit über 1000 Schallplattenaufnahmen verfügt das Philharmonia Orchestra über die größte Orchesterdiskographie der Welt, die auch Fernseh- und Filmmusik beinhaltet, und genießt weltweit höchstes Ansehen. Das Orchester hat für Opera Rara mehrere Recitals sowie elf komplette Opern eingespielt und in der Reihe "Opera in English" für Chandos mit Unterstützung durch die Peter Moores

Foundation *The Thieving Magpie*, *Wozzeck*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Elixir of Love*, *Lucia of Lammermoor*, *Faust*, *Carmen*, *Aida*, *La Bohème*, *Madam Butterfly*, *Turandot*, die preisgekrönte *Tosca* und Opernarien in Solorecitals mit Bruce Ford, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny und John Tomlinson aufgenommen. Das Philharmonia Orchestra untermauert seinen internationalen Rang durch regelmäßige Tourneen und Gastauftritte an berühmten Häusern wie dem Châtelet Théâtre Musical in Paris, dem Megaron in Athen und dem Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York.

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

Er übt in Großbritannien und international eine weitgespannte Tätigkeit in den Bereichen Oper und Konzert aus, hat mehrere

Produktionen der English National Opera und der Opera North dirigiert und tritt regelmäßig mit dem Philharmonia Orchestra und dem London Philharmonic Orchestra auf. 1996 gab er sein Debüt beim Glyndebourne Festival mit *Così fan tutte* und hat dort 1998 die Uraufführung von Jonathan Doves *Flight* geleitet.

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

Seine Tätigkeit im Aufnahmestudio umfaßt die Produktion von Marschners *Der Vampyr* fürs BBC-Fernsehen und achtundzwanzig vollständige Opernaufzeichnungen unter der

Schirmherrschaft der Peter Moores Foundation. Darunter befinden sich zahlreiche Aufnahmen der Reihe Opera Rara, die mehrere Preise gewonnen haben, beispielsweise den belgischen Prix Cecilia für Donizettis *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*. Für Chandos hat er die Aufzeichnung einer Serie von Programmen mit Opernarien geleitet (mit Sir Thoms Allen, Bruce Ford, Alan Opie, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny, John

Tomlinson, Barry Banks, Della Jones und Andrew Shore), außerdem *Fidelio*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *A Masked Ball*, *Idomeneo*, *Carmen*, *The Thieving Magpie*, *Don Giovanni*, *Don Pasquale*, *The Elixir of Love*, *Lucia of Lammermoor*, *Ernani*, *Il trovatore*, *Aida*, *Faust*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *La bohème*, *Turandot*, die preisgekrönte *Tosca* und Highlights aus dem *Rosenkavalier*, jeweils in Zusammenarbeit mit der Peter Moores Foundation.

Grands airs d'opéra

Un programme comme celui de ce récital est riche en associations pour les collectionneurs de disques. Les titres sont liés à des noms, les arias à des interprètes, et l'évocation de "Ocean thou mighty monster" ("Océan, monstre redoutable") ou de "Dich, teure Halle" (Entrée d'Élisabeth) fait chanter toute une palette de sonorités. Ces morceaux figurent traditionnellement au répertoire des plus merveilleuses voix de soprano. Les enregistrements qui en ont été faits sont très anciens et ramènent à la vie des voix réputées au dix-neuvième siècle. Anna Bahr-Mildenburg, la grande soprano dramatique de l'Opéra de Vienne à l'époque de Mahler, enregistra "Ocean, thou mighty monster" en 1904. Lilli Lehmann qui faisait figure de vétéran lors de la première saison à Bayreuth et qui était la principale soprano wagnérienne à Covent Garden et au Metropolitan à l'"Âge d'or" des années 1890 enregistra l'aria de la Vengeance de Donna Anna et plusieurs autres pièces reprises ici; en dépit de l'âge avancé de la cantatrice, elles sont titaniques par leur conception et souvent extrêmement impressionnantes sur la plan vocal et technique. Frida Leider qui fut

adulée par le public londonien dans l'entre-deux-guerres brilla aussi dans cette aria et Kirsten Flagstad, qui lui succéda, enregistra également "Ocean, thou mighty monster" et l'aria de concert de Beethoven "Ah! perfido". Plus proches, pensons aux coloris émouvants de Birgit Nilsson ou aux tonalités plus riches de Jessye Norman dans La prière d'Élisabeth. Ainsi défile dans l'imagination du collectionneur un cortège d'une rare majesté vocale, et dans son sillage se profile l'espoir que la ligne se poursuivra jusqu'à nos jours.

Christine Brewer occupe une place de choix parmi les sopranos héroïques de notre temps. Sa voix a la particularité exceptionnelle d'associer de manière idéale puissance et fermeté, éclat et ampleur. Elle a aussi le tempérament qui convient. Christine Brewer est très chaleureuse, elle sait comment convaincre dramatiquement; ces qualités imprègnent tant les moments d'émotion paisibles et intimes que les moments de grandeur généralement considérés comme les sommets de l'art du chanteur héroïque. En termes de répertoire, ces sommets sont habituellement illustrés par les deux grands

rôles wagnériens d'Isolde et de Brünnhilde. On s'attend à ce qu'un grand moment du Festival d'Edimbourg 2005 soit l'interprétation en concert de *Tristan et Isolde* lors duquel Christine Brewer chantera le rôle de l'héroïne avec Peter Lang dans le rôle de Brangaene et Christian Franz dans celui de Tristan. La presse américaine la décrit déjà comme la cantatrice qui "devrait partout chanter le rôle d'Isolde et de Brünnhilde". Ce "partout" recèle bien sûr un danger: de l'avis de Flagstad et de Lauritz Melchior, quand le public souhaite qu'un chanteur ait le monopole de certains rôles, ces rôles à leur tour ont tendance à monopoliser le chanteur. Tout spécialiste de Wagner doit se laisser une porte de sortie.

Le présent programme montre que Christine Brewer a manifestement de nombreuses cordes à son arc en dehors de Wagner. Elle a davantage encore à offrir, car elle est aussi une artiste de concert très appréciée dont le répertoire de Lieder de Schubert est (particulièrement) large. À l'opéra, elle s'est notamment distinguée dans *Gloriana* de Britten et dans *Vanessa* de Barber. Et il est toujours rassurant de constater, comme ici, que Mozart a joué un rôle important dans la carrière d'une cantatrice. Brewer a fait ses débuts à New York et à Londres dans le rôle de la Comtesse (*Les Noces de Figaro*), et pour un

rôle de ce type, il est essentiel que la cantatrice maîtrise parfaitement les qualités vocales de flexibilité, de justesse, de régularité et de legato véritable. Il va presque sans dire que rechercher et privilégier le volume de la voix et chanter à répétition des rôles exigeant impérativement du volume portera trop souvent préjudice à ces qualités. Mozart insiste pour qu'elles soient préservées.

Mozart est représenté ici par le duo, le récitatif et l'aria de **Don Giovanni** (page 2). Donna Anna est à présent le rôle mozartien auquel le nom de Christine Brewer est le plus étroitement associé, le rôle (par exemple) qui lui valut un vif succès à Édimbourg sous la direction de sir Charles Mackerras en 1995. La hiérarchie des trois parties pour voix féminines dans *Don Giovanni* a été remise en question au cours des dernières années. Il paraissait évident que Zerlina (rôle que l'on veut parfois confier maintenant à la mezzo) soit toujours une soprano légère, même un rôle de soubrette, Donna Elvira un rôle lyrique standard et Donna Anna le rôle important. Telle était la distribution lors d'une célèbre reprise de l'opéra à Covent Garden sous la baguette de Bruno Walter en 1926: Elisabeth Schumann interprétait le rôle de Zerlina, Lotte Lehmann celui d'Elvira et Frida Leider celui d'Anna. Il

s'avéra que Lehmann et Leider avaient toutes deux une telle présence sur scène qu'elles semblaient s'éclipser l'une l'autre, mais il aurait été impensable pour elles d'échanger leurs rôles, tout comme il était invariablement de coutume à l'époque que dans *Die Walküre* Lehmann chante Sieglinde lorsque Leider chantait Brünnhilde. Les chefs et producteurs contemporains ont eu tendance plus souvent à demander, dans *Don Giovanni* du moins, pourquoi il devait en être ainsi. Anna est-elle manifestement le caractère plus sympathique, plus doux, et Elvira, la harpie?

Mais aucun débat sur les personnages d'opéra ne peut progresser sans qu'il soit fait référence à la musique qu'ils interprètent, et en l'occurrence c'est l'aria de la Vengeance de Donna Anna qui règle la question. La puissante envolée des phrases, l'intensité de la colère (que la maîtrise anoblit) et surtout l'effet de ces "la" très élevés, formant un climax, exigent une voix héroïque par son ampleur et sa qualité: le rôle donc, en plus de toutes ses autres facettes, demande de la grandeur dans le style mais aussi dans la capacité vocale.

Peut-être est-il impossible d'estimer exactement aujourd'hui en quoi les attentes en la matière à l'heure actuelle diffèrent des attentes à l'époque de Mozart. Nous savons

que les orchestres et la plupart des théâtres étaient plus petits à cette époque, mais il est certain que la puissance d'une voix était un facteur d'évaluation et il l'a été dès l'aube de l'histoire de l'opéra. Les premiers traités sur l'art vocal accordent beaucoup d'importance à la faculté d'un chanteur d'enfler une note, puis de diminuer le son, ce que l'on nomme *messaggio di voce*. Les célèbres castrats, Senesino, Carestini et Farinelli par exemple, étaient tous très appréciés pour la puissance et la plénitude de leur voix. Et cependant ces qualités ne semblent pas avoir été des priorités absolues. La beauté du son et l'habileté technique primaient, et ce n'est qu'assez tardivement au 19^e siècle qu'apparut quelque indice d'un culte du volume en soi.

Même les sopranos de Mozart semblent avoir été remarquées pour leur tessiture et leur agilité vocale plus que pour leur puissance, et l'on a dit de Teresa Saporiti, la première Anna: "sa voix est un peu faible et elle néglige l'expression dans les récitatifs". Quelques années après la première de *Don Giovanni*, elle devint *prima buffa assoluta* et se spécialisa dans des rôles comme celui de Rosina dans le *Barbier de Séville* de Paisiello. Et peu importe ce que prétendent les connaisseurs qui pensent que le "créateur" d'un rôle reflètera fidèlement

les souhaits du compositeur; s'il faut retenir quoi que ce soit de cet exemple, c'est que Mozart attachait beaucoup de prix aux compétences techniques et Saporiti semblait être très douée à cet égard.

Un siècle nouveau marque véritablement une ère nouvelle parfois bien qu'il n'y ait guère de raison qui le justifie. En 1800, c'est par Gluck, un compositeur férù de réforme, que l'évolution de l'opéra fut fondamentalement influencée. La création de son *Alceste* date de 1767, mais ensuite et pendant de nombreuses années, Gluck, tout comme Mozart, fut respecté par les musiciens sérieux qui les considéraient comme les pionniers de l'opéra futur. Il en résulta, pour les interprètes, que l'agilité vocale dans l'ornementation perdit sa position dominante et céda de plus en plus le pas à l'expressivité. L'aria d'*Alceste* (page 3) généralement connue sous son titre français, "Divinités du Styx", est un bon exemple du style noble, simple mais imposant, convenant à la voix que nous considérons maintenant comme celle de la soprano héroïque, dramatique. Et de là il n'y a qu'un pas vers Beethoven et Weber.

Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient ne fut pas la première Leonora de Beethoven (elle n'avait qu'un an lors de la création de la version

originale de l'opéra en 1805). Toutefois à l'âge de dix-huit ans, en 1822, elle métamorphosa le rôle, et jusqu'à un certain point la conception fondamentale de la cantatrice à l'opéra. Elle fut peut-être la première soprano vraiment moderne. Avec elle il semble que la vérité dramatique soit devenue primordiale et que l'identité de la soprano dramatique se soit précisée. Elle était aussi réputée pour son interprétation de Weber et ainsi est franchie la passerelle vers Wagner: elle devint la première Adriana dans *Rienzi*, puis Senta dans le *Vaisseau fantôme* et Vénus dans *Tannhäuser*.

Le présent récital retrace en quelque sorte l'itinéraire du voyage qui conduit à Wagner, mais il s'arrête à *Tannhäuser* (page 1) sans inclure les rôles généralement considérés comme l'accomplissement ultime dans le répertoire héroïque, les grands rôles de Brünnhilde et Isolde. Les étapes du voyage sont l'aria de concert de Beethoven "Ah! perfido" (page 11), l'aria "Ocean" de l'opéra *Obéron* (page 4) de Weber et la scène d'*Euryanthe* (page 6), et enfin deux ajouts de compositeurs dont la présence semble inattendue, Rossini et Sullivan. La pièce de Rossini (page 10) est marquée en différents endroits par l'école de chant résolument supplantée par ces autres compositeurs, de

Beethoven à Wagner; ces empreintes sont perceptibles au travers des arabesques et des trilles ornementales, de la manière dont la cantatrice est encouragée à déployer son agilité technique ainsi que dans la puissance pure et sans artifice du do élevé. La pièce est de toute évidence écrite pour une voix imposante, et lorsqu'elle est exécutée avec grand orchestre et chœur, une très profonde émotion, proche de celle qu'éveille Turandot de Puccini, est créée par la voix de soprano qui fend l'air et résonne à plein volume. Peut-être ne sera-t-on guère surpris dès lors de voir l'aria du **Stabat Mater** de Rossini reprise dans ce programme. Toutefois la présence de **The Golden Legend** de Sullivan (page 51) paraîtra certes insolite à tous les auditeurs, excepté quelques collectionneurs de disques doués d'une excellente mémoire. En effet, ils se souviendront sans doute d'un 78 tours HMV (étiquette brune) réalisé en 1930: avec le chœur et l'orchestre du Royal Opera, Covent Garden, dirigés par John Barbirolli, Florence Austral chante les deux solos avec sa superbe voix de Brünnhilde. Il y a donc un précédent.

Ce n'est pas le cas sans doute pour les quatre autres pages de ce récital – bien que si l'on y pense, ces pièces auraient pu être

chantées en bis dans un programme avec Birgit Nilsson. Vocalement, les opérettes de Lehár et Kálmán (**Countess Maritza**, (page 71) sont bien sûr dans la ligne de la tradition des opéras du dix-neuvième siècle: elles exigent et valorisent les atouts d'une voix ample et d'une ligne vocale bien préservée. **Giuditta** (page 91), en particulier, étant l'œuvre dans laquelle Lehár est le plus proche du style opératique, a attiré de nombreuses sopranos dont la voix n'était pas normalement associée au balancement d'un air de valse séduisant. Les comédies musicales américaines sont en quelque sorte une extension de la tradition plus ancienne de l'opérette; elles sont plus proches du style moderne désinvolte mais encore mélodiques dans l'ensemble et donne même l'impression d'une certaine grandeur lorsqu'elles sont chantées par une voix imposante, comme c'est le cas ici. La jeune fille sans prétentions de **Mira** (page 121) fait peut-être figure d'exception en compagnie d'Alceste, de Donna Anna et des autres représentants de ce clan d'interprètes dramatiques, mais Brünnhilde elle-même ne pourrait-elle pas trouver, si le groupe des neuf voix de femmes qui la soutiennent était élargi, comme ici, et devenait un chœur d'opéra à part entière pouvant occuper tout un terrain de football,

que "You'll never walk alone" (page 81) est une jolie mélodie à chanter...?

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Note de la cantatrice

Chaque année la petite Shawnee High School montait une grande comédie musicale, et à dix-sept ans, interprétant le rôle de l'Abbesse dans *The Sound of Music*, j'ai chanté "Climb every mountain", que j'offre souvent encore en bis.

Quant à "Mira", c'est un air que je chante depuis quinze ans environ, assez souvent en bis aussi. Les sentiments exprimés par cette jeune fille dans *Carnival* de Bob Merrill ressemblent tellement à ce que j'éprouve... moi qui ai passé ma jeunesse dans une petite ville et qui emporte mes souvenirs partout où je vais. J'ai grandi dans une ville de cinq cents habitants (Grand Tower, Illinois) et je vis à présent dans une GRANDE ville de trois mille cinq cents habitants (Lebanon, Illinois). Si souvent quand mes voyages me conduisent dans des endroits comme Londres, New York ou Paris, je repense à ce qu'était ma jeunesse dans une ville où "tout le monde connaissait mon nom..."

© Christine Brewer

Traduction: Marie-Françoise de Meëtis

Née dans l'Illinois, la soprano américaine **Christine Brewer** commença sa carrière professionnelle avec l'Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, avec qui elle a chanté Ellen Orford, Donna Anna et les rôles-titres d'*Ariadne auf Naxos* et d'*Armida* de Haydn. Parmi ses autres prestations, notons la comtesse Almaviva (New York City Opera et The Royal Opera, Covent Garden), Donna Anna (au Festival d'Edimbourg sous la baguette de Sir Charles Mackerras et à Londres, New York ainsi qu'en Floride). Elle a chanté *Iphigénie en Tauride* de Gluck à Madrid, Leonore (*Fidelio*) avec le St Paul Chamber Orchestra, *Oberon* de Weber avec Richard Hickox à Londres et *Die Aegyptische Helena* de Strauss à Santa Fe. Elle interpréta le rôle d'Isolde pour la première fois avec le BBC Symphony Orchestra et Donald Runnicles, chanta *Gloriana* de Britten avec Richard Hickox au Festival d'Aldeburgh et fut Chrysothemis (*Elektra*) avec le Cleveland Orchestra et Frans Welser-Möst. Elle s'est forgée une réputation sur la scène internationale grâce à son interprétation d'*Ariadne auf Naxos* de Strauss, un rôle qu'elle a tenu pour l'English National Opera, l'Opéra de Lyon (à Lyon et à Paris), le Festival de Santa Fe ainsi que pour ses débuts au Metropolitan Opera sous la baguette de James Levine.

En concert, Christine Brewer a chanté avec les principaux orchestres britanniques et américains sous la baguette de chefs tels Sir Roger Norrington, Michael Tilson Thomas, Kurt Masur, John Adams, Christoph von Dohnányi, Raymond Leppard, Mark Wigglesworth, Andrew Litton, John Nelson, Sir Neville Marriner, Wolfgang Sawallisch et Ivan Fischer. Elle a enregistré entre autres le rôle-titre dans *Fidelio* pour le serie de Chandos “Opera in English”, la *Messe glagolitique* de Janáček et le *Tè Deum* de Dvořák avec Robert Shaw, *Don Giovanni* avec Sir Charles Mackerras, *Vanessa* de Barber sous la baguette de Leonard Slatkin et elle a participé à l’Edition intégrale de Schubert par Graham Johnson.

Récemment, elle a pris part aux concerts de gala du Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (sous la baguette de Bernard Haitink), chanté *Il Prigioniero* de Dallapiccola au Théâtre de la Monnaie à Bruxelles (avec Antonio Pappano) et forgé des liens solides avec les Promenade Concerts de la BBC, chantant entre autres le *War Requiem* de Britten sous la baguette de Jane Glover, la *Messe glagolitique* de Janáček avec Sir Andrew Davis, *Die Walküre* de Wagner et les *Gurrelieder* de Schoenberg sous Donald Runnicles ainsi que la Huitième symphonie de Mahler sous Sir Simon Rattle.

Reconnu comme l’un des plus grands orchestres du monde, le **Philharmonia Orchestra** a depuis plus de cinq ans le grand maestro allemand Christoph von Dohnányi pour chef principal. Le premier à avoir tenu ce poste fut Otto Klemperer et l’Orchestre depuis lors a collaboré avec succès avec Lorin Maazel (au poste de chef principal assistant), Ricardo Muti (chef principal et directeur musical), Giuseppe Sinopoli (directeur musical), une tradition qui se poursuit aujourd’hui avec Kurt Sanderling (chef émérite), Vladimir Ashkenazy (chef lauréat) et Sir Charles Mackerras (chef principal invité). L’ensemble a également été associé à des personnalités aussi éminentes que Wilhelm Furtwängler, Richard Strauss, Arturo Toscanini, Guido Cantelli, Herbert von Karajan et Carlo Maria Giulini. L’Orchestre continue à collaborer avec des chefs et des solistes de stature mondiale et recrute les jeunes instrumentistes les plus talentueux d’Europe.

Orchestre résident au Royal Festival Hall, il joue également un rôle central dans la vie musicale britannique en choisissant des résidences régionales qui sont l’occasion idéale de développer un programme éducatif dynamique centré sur la communauté. Lauréat de nombreux prix, l’ensemble a été salué

unanimentement par les critiques pour ses programmes innovateurs dont l’un des objectifs principaux est l’interprétation et la commande d’œuvres nouvelles des plus grands compositeurs d’aujourd’hui.

Un nombre croissant de concerts de l’Orchestre sont retransmis par BBC Radio 3, entre autres sa participation annuelle aux Promenade Concerts de la BBC. L’orchestre symphonique le plus enregistré au monde, avec plus de mille disques à son actif, parmi lesquels plusieurs bandes originales pour le cinéma et la télévision, le Philharmonia Orchestra est réputé dans le monde entier. Sa discographie comprend, pour Opera Rara, plusieurs disques de récitals ainsi que onze intégrales d’opéras et, pour Opera in English chez Chandos, série financée par la Peter Moores Foundation, *The Thieving Magpie*, *Wozzeck*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Elixir of Love*, *Lucia of Lammermoor*, *Faust*, *Carmen*, *Aïda*, *La Bohème*, *Madam Butterfly*, *Turandot*, une version primée de *Tosca* ainsi que plusieurs récitals solistes d’airs lyriques avec Bruce Ford, Diana Montague, Dennis O’Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny et John Tomlinson. Le Philharmonia Orchestra consolide constamment sa réputation internationale grâce à des tournées régulières et récemment de prestigieuses résidences au

Châtelet Théâtre Musical à Paris, au Megaron à Athènes et au Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts à New York.

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

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

Il séjourne fréquemment en Espagne où il a dirigé en concert la plupart des grands orchestres espagnols. C’est lui qui dirigea la première espagnole de *Peter Grimes* à Madrid et en 1996 la première production espagnole

de *The Rake's Progress*. Il a dirigé en Allemagne, en Suisse, aux Pays-Bas, au Festival de Pesaro en Italie, au Festival international de Hong-Kong, au Japon pour une tournée de *Carmen* et au Mexique avec l'Orchestre symphonique d'UNAM. Il a récemment dirigé plusieurs nouvelles productions dont *Fidelio* au Festival de Nouvelle-Zélande, *Lucia di Lammermoor* avec le New Israeli Opera et *Don Giovanni* à l'Opéra d'état de Hannover.

En studio, il a participé entre autres à la production de la BBC Television de *Der Vampyr* de Marschner, dirigeant aussi vingt-huit intégrales d'opéras financées par la Peter Moores Foundation. Plusieurs de ces intégrales furent enregistrées pour Opera Rara et primées, *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* de Donizetti

recevant en Belgique le Prix Cecilia. Pour Chandos, David Parry a dirigé une série d'enregistrements d'airs d'opéra (avec Sir Thomas Allen, Bruce Ford, Alan Opie, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny, John Tomlinson, Barry Banks, Della Jones et Andrew Shore) de même que *Fidelio*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *A Masked Ball*, *Idomeneo*, *Carmen*, *The Thieving Magpie*, *Don Giovanni*, *Don Pasquale*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Ernani*, *Il trovatore*, *Aida*, *Faust*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *La bohème*, *Turandot*, l'enregistrement primé de *Tosca* et des extraits de *Der Rosenkavalier*, tous ces enregistrements étant réalisés en collaboration avec la Peter Moores Foundation.



Christine Brewer in the title role of Santa Fe Opera's production of Richard Strauss's *The Egyptian Helen*

Grandi arie operistiche

Per i collezionisti di dischi, un programma come questo è pieno di associazioni. I titoli rimandano ad altri nomi, le arie ricordano altri cantanti e tutta una rete di sonorità si accende con l'invocazione "Ocean, thou mighty monster" dell'*Oberon* o "Dich, teure Halle" di Elisabeth nel *Tannhäuser*. Questi brani sono tradizionalmente appannaggio delle regine della voce, in una discografia delle origini, con nomi dell'Ottocento. Anna Bahr-Mildenburg, il grande soprano drammatico dell'Opera di Vienna all'epoca di Mahler, registrò "Ocean, thou mighty monster" nel 1904. Lilli Lehmann, veterana della prima stagione di Bayreuth e primo soprano wagneriano al Covent Garden e al Metropolitan durante il decennio aureo del 1890, eseguì un'incisione dell'aria della vendetta di Donna Anna e diversi altri brani inclusi nella presente registrazione, di spirito titanico e spesso straordinariamente notevoli per la sua voce e tecnica nonostante l'età avanzata dell'artista. Anche Frida Leider, adorata dal pubblico londinese negli anni tra le due guerre mondiali, si distinse in quell'aria; seguì Kirsten Flagstad, che incluse anche lei "Ocean, thou mighty monster" e l'aria

concertistica di Beethoven "Ah! perfido" nella sua discografia. Più avanti nel tempo, pensiamo ai toni avvolgenti di Birgit Nilsson o quelli più ricchi di Jessye Norman nel Saluto di Elisabeth. Una rara processione di ugole maestose sfila davanti agli occhi e alle orecchie nell'immaginazione del nostro collezionista, seguita sempre dall'inevitabile speranza di un prolungamento nei nostri giorni.

Christine Brewer occupa un posto di primo piano tra i soprani eroici del nostro tempo. La sua voce è eccezionale per la combinazione ideale di potenza e fermezza, luminosità ed estensione, accompagnate da una personalità a tutto tondo. Il suo caldo sentimento e l'interpretazione drammatica convincente si estendono alle espressioni più tranquille e intime, come ai momenti grandiosi che nell'opinione generale segnano la vetta dell'arte del cantante eroico. Per quanto riguarda il repertorio, tale vetta è generalmente rappresentata dai due grandi ruoli wagneriani di Isolde e Brünnhilde. Uno dei momenti d'oro del festival di Edimburgo del 2005 (ancora a qualche mese di distanza mentre si scrive) dovrebbe essere l'esecuzione in concerto

di *Tristan and Isolde* in cui la cantante interpreta il ruolo dell'eroina accanto alla Brangaene di Petra Lang e al Tristan di Christian Franz. La stampa americana l'ha già definita "un'interprete obbligata di Isolde e Brünnhilde, dovunque". Ma quel "dovunque" nasconde un rischio: come scoprirono la Flagstad e Lauritz Melchior, quando una cantante ha il monopolio delle preferenze per determinati ruoli, a loro volta tali ruoli finiscono per monopolizzare l'interprete. La specialista wagneriana deve lasciarsi una via d'uscita.

Il presente programma rivela con chiarezza che Christine Brewer ha molto da offrire al di là di Wagner. Molto di più, in quanto è anche apprezzata in concerto, con un grande repertorio di lieder schubertiani (in particolare). In teatro alcuni dei suoi maggiori successi sono legati a *Gloriana* di Britten e *Vanessa* di Barber. Ed è sempre rassicurante scoprire, come qui, che Mozart è stato una pietra miliare nella carriera di una cantante. La Brewer ha debuttato a New York e a Londra cantando la Contessa nelle *Nozze di Figaro*, ruolo che esige un pieno possesso delle virtù liriche della flessibilità, del tono puro, della produzione stabile e del vero legato. Non c'è bisogno di dire che la cura del volume puro e semplice e la ripetuta esecuzione di ruoli che lo richiedono viene troppo spesso

perseguita a spese di una o di tutte queste virtù. Mozart insiste che vengano preservate.

Il compositore è qui rappresentato dal duetto, recitativo e aria dal **Don Giovanni** (traccia [2]). Donna Anna oggi è il ruolo mozartiano con cui Christine Brewer è più strettamente legata, il ruolo (per esempio) di un suo successo passato a Edimburgo, con sir Charles Mackerras nel 1995. La disposizione delle tre parti femminili nel *Don Giovanni* è stata messa in discussione negli ultimi anni. Un tempo era sufficientemente chiara: Zerlina (ruolo oggi talvolta rivendicato dal mezzosoprano) era sempre stata un soprano leggero, una soubrette addirittura, Donna Elvira un normale ruolo lirico e Donna Anna era il pezzo grosso. Ecco il cast di un famoso revival al Covent Garden diretto da Bruno Walter nel 1926: Elisabeth Schumann nel ruolo Zerlina, Lotte Lehmann in quello di Elvira e Frida Leider nelle vesti di Anna. Alla fine si disse che la Lehmann e la Leider avessero entrambe una tale presenza scenica da annullarsi apparentemente a vicenda. Ma sarebbe stato impensabile uno scambio di ruoli: in quegli anni la regola fissa era Sieglinde per la Lehmann accanto alla Brünnhilde della Leider in *Die Walküre*. I moderni direttori d'orchestra e produttori sono stati più inclini a chiedersi perché le cose debbano stare in questo modo, almeno nel

Don Giovanni. Dopo tutto Anna è un personaggio più delicato, più comprensivo, mentre Elvira è la bisbetica...

Ma nessun discorso sui personaggi di un'opera va molto lontano senza fare riferimento alla musica a loro assegnata, e in questo caso è decisiva l'aria della vendetta di Donna Anna. La potente avanzata delle frasi, l'intensità dell'ira (nobilitata dal ritegno) e soprattutto l'effetto dei la acuti culminanti richiedono una voce di volume e qualità eroici: qualunque altra cosa comporti il ruolo, questo richiede grandiosità non solo di stile, ma di capacità vocale.

La differenza tra ciò che si pretendeva da questa capacità all'epoca di Mozart rispetto ai nostri giorni forse è impossibile da verificare con precisione. Sappiamo che le orchestre e la maggior parte dei teatri dell'epoca erano di dimensioni più ridotte, ma sicuramente uno dei fattori importanti nella valutazione di una voce era la sua potenza, come del resto è accaduto fin dall'inizio nella storia della lirica. I primi trattati sull'arte del canto dedicano ampio spazio alla capacità di crescere e poi diminuire su una nota, nella cosiddetta messa di voce. I famosi castrati Senesino, Carestini e Farinelli, per esempio, erano tutti apprezzati per le loro risorse di potenza e pienezza. Ma non sembra comunque che queste fossero delle

precedenze assolute. La bellezza del tono e la tecnica erano considerate di valore superiore e pochi sono gli indizi del culto del volume in sé fino a Ottocento avanzato.

Persino i soprani di Mozart sembrano essere stati notevoli per gamma e agilità piuttosto che per potenza e di Teresa Saporiti, la prima Anna, si disse: "ha una voce piuttosto piccola e trascura l'espressione nei recitativi". Alcuni anni dopo la prima del *Don Giovanni* la cantante divenne la *prima buffa assoluta* e si specializzò in ruoli come quello di Rosina nel *Barbiere di Siviglia* di Paisiello. Questo smentisce l'idea, cara ai conoscitori, che il "creatore" di un ruolo offra un indice affidabile dei desideri del compositore; o forse, se c'è qualcosa da imparare in questo caso, è che per Mozart la cosa più importante era la tecnica, di cui la Saporiti si diceva fosse ben dotata.

Talvolta un nuovo secolo contrassegna davvero una nuova era, anche se apparentemente senza ragione. Nel 1800 un'influenza fondamentale nel progresso dell'opera rimaneva la riforma di Gluck. La prima della sua *Alceste* risale al 1767, ma per molti anni in seguito lo stesso compositore e Mozart con lui furono rispettati dai musicisti seri in quanto erano stati loro a indicare la via. Per i cantanti questo significò che l'abilità legata

agli abbellimenti perse il suo posto dominante, occupato sempre più dall'espressività. L'aria di *Alceste* (traccia [3]), generalmente nota con il titolo francese "Divinités du Styx", è un buon esempio dello stile nobile, semplice ma energico, adatto alla voce di quello che oggi si definisce un soprano drammatico, eroico. E da qui a Beethoven e Weber il passo non è lungo.

Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient non fu la prima Leonora di Beethoven (aveva appena un anno nel 1805, che vide la prima della versione originale). Nel 1822, però, a diciotto anni, trasformò il ruolo e in qualche modo il concetto fondamentale della cantante lirica. Forse fu il primo soprano distintamente moderno. Con il suo avvento, sembra, la verità drammatica conquistò il primo posto, e l'identità del soprano drammatico guadagnò definizione. La cantante fu anche famosa per la sua interpretazione di Weber e rappresenta l'anello di congiunzione con Wagner: fu lei la prima Adriana nel *Rienzi*, quindi Senta nell'*Olandese volante* e Venere nel *Tannhäuser*.

Il presente recital traccia, per così dire, un itinerario che si spinge fino a Wagner, ma si ferma al *Tannhäuser* (traccia [1]) e non raggiunge quelle che vengono generalmente considerate le estreme propaggini del repertorio eroico, i grandi ruoli di Brünnhilde

e Isolde. Le tappe del viaggio sono rappresentate dall'aria da concerto di Beethoven "Ah! perfido" (traccia [11]), l'aria dell'Oceano dall'*Oberon* (traccia [4]) e la scena da *Euryanthe* (traccia [8]) di Weber, e due interpolazioni di due compositori apparentemente incongrui: Rossini e Sullivan. Il brano di Rossini (traccia [10]) porta numerosi segni della scuola di canto risolutamente superata dalla generazione che va da Beethoven a Wagner: i gruppetti e i trilli ornamentali, l'incoraggiamento dello sfoggio di abilità tecniche in una cantante, oltre alla pura e semplice potenza del suo do di petto. Il brano è chiaramente pensato per una voce grande e quando viene proposto con un'orchestra e coro al completo è trascinante, quasi come la voce del soprano che si innalza e risuona a pieno volume nella *Turandot* di Puccini. Forse quindi non sorprende l'inclusione dell'aria dallo *Stabat Mater* di Rossini. Ma *The Golden Legend* di Sullivan (traccia [5]) sarà certamente un brano inatteso – per tutti tranne per alcuni collezionisti di dischi con una memoria di ferro, i quali forse ricorderanno un'etichetta marrone HMV 78 giri registrata nel 1930 dal coro e dall'orchestra della Royal Opera, Covent Garden, diretti da John Barbirolli, dove Florence Austral esegue

entrambi gli assoli con voce da valchiria nel suo pieno splendore. Un precedente esiste.

Lo stesso forse non si può sostenere per le ultime quattro tracce, anche se, a ripensarci, potrebbero essere state utilizzate come bis in qualche programma con Birgit Nilsson. Dal punto di vista vocale, le operette di Lehár e Kálmán (**Countess Maritza**, traccia [7]) rientrano naturalmente nella stessa tradizione delle opere ottocentesche: richiedono e premiano il fascino di una voce grande e la fedeltà alla linea vocale. In particolare **Giuditta** (traccia [8]), la composizione di Lehár più vicina allo stile operistico, ha attirato molte voci che non verrebbero di norma associate con il ritmo di un seducente valzer. I brani dei musical americani sono una sorta di prolungamento della più antica tradizione dell'operetta, più vicini allo stile moderno disinvolto, ma sempre largamente melodico, persino capaci di una certa grandiosità se eseguiti da una grande voce, come qui. La ragazza senza pretese dalla **Mira** (traccia [12]) sarà forse un'eccezione che si accompagna ad Alceste, Donna Anna e le altre della stessa tribù drammatica. Ma forse proprio Brünnhilde, avendo a disposizione un coro operistico completo in grado di riempire uno potrebbe apprezzare la bellezza di un motivo come "You'll never walk alone" (traccia [8]).

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Nota dell'interprete

Ogni anno la nostra piccola Shawnee High School allestisce un grande musical. A diciassette anni io interpretai il ruolo della Madre Badessa in *The Sound of Music*, e cantai "Climb every mountain", che uso ancora spesso come bis.

Esegui "Mira" da circa quindici anni, anche in questo caso spesso come bis. I sentimenti espressi da questa giovane nel *Carnival* di Bob Merrill sono talmente simili ai miei... anch'io sono cresciuta in un paesino e mi porto sempre dietro quei ricordi ovunque. Il mio paese d'origine (Grand Tower, Illinois) contava 500 abitanti, mentre oggi abito in un GROSSO centro di 3.500 abitanti (Lebanon, Illinois). Così spesso quando vado in città come Londra, New York o Parigi, ripenso a cosa significa crescere in un paese in cui "tutti conoscono il mio nome".

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Christine Brewer, soprano americano, è nata nell'Illinois. La sua carriera professionale è iniziata con l'Opera Theatre di Saint Louis, con cui ha interpretato Ellen Orford, Donna Anna e i ruoli di protagonista in *Ariadne auf Naxos* di Strauss e *Armida* di Haydn. Altre

apparizioni hanno compreso la Contessa Almaviva (New York City Opera e Royal Opera, Covent Garden), Donna Anna (Festival di Edimburgo per la direzione di sir Charles Mackerras e Londra, New York e Florida). Ha cantato *Iphigenie en Tauride* di Gluck a Madrid, Leonora (*Fidelio*) con la St Paul Chamber Orchestra, *Oberon* di Weber con Richard Hickox a Londra e *Die Aegyptische Helena* di Strauss a Santa Fe. Ha esordito nel ruolo di Isolda con la BBC Symphony Orchestra e Donald Runnicles, *Gloriana* di Britten con Richard Hickox al festival di Aldeburgh e Chrysothemis (*Elektra*) con l'Orchestra di Cleveland e Frans Welser-Möst. Ha ottenuto fama internazionale per le sue interpretazioni di *Ariadne auf Naxos* di Strauss per English National Opera, Opéra de Lyon (a Lione e Parigi), il Festival di Santa Fe e al debutto alla Metropolitan Opera con James Levine.

Christine Brewer si è esibita in concerto con le più importanti orchestre americane e britanniche e direttori quali sir Roger Norrington, Michael Tilson-Thomas, Kurt Masur, John Adams, Christoph von Dohnányi, Raymond Leppard, Mark Wigglesworth, Andrew Litton, John Nelson, sir Neville Marriner, Wolfgang Sawallisch e

Ivan Fischer. La discografia include il ruolo di protagonista nel *Fidelio* per la serie Opera in English da Chandos, la *Messa Glagolitica* di Janáček e il *Te Deum* di Dvořák con Robert Shaw, Don Giovanni diretto da sir Charles Mackerras, *Vanessa* di Barber con Leonard Slatkin, oltre alla partecipazione all'Edizione Schubert integrale di Graham Johnson.

Gli impegni concertistici più recenti hanno compreso serate di gala alla Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (con Bernard Haitink), *Il Prigioniero* di Dallapiccola al teatro La Monnaie di Bruxelles (diretta da Antonio Pappano), e un solido impegno nella serie dei BBC Proms, in cui ha interpretato, tra l'altro, il *War Requiem* di Britten per la direzione di Jane Glover, la *Messa Glagolitica* di Janáček con sir Andrew Davis, *Die Walküre* di Wagner, i *Gurrelieder* di Schönberg diretti da Donald Runnicles, e l'ottava Sinfonia di Mahler diretta da sir Simon Rattle.

La **Philharmonia Orchestra**, una delle più grandi orchestre del mondo, è diretta per la sesta stagione consecutiva dal famoso maestro tedesco Christoph von Dohnányi, in qualità di Direttore Principale. In precedenza questa carica era appartenuta a Otto Klemperer e da allora l'Orchestra ha collaborato con nomi di

prestigio come Lorin Maazel (Direttore Principale Associato), Riccardo Muti (Direttore Principale e Direttore Musicale), Giuseppe Sinopoli (Direttore Musicale) e, attualmente, Kurt Sanderling (Direttore Emerito), Vladimir Ashkenazy (Direttore Laureato) e Sir Charles Mackerras (Direttore Principale Ospite), oltre che con artisti importanti come Wilhelm Furtwängler, Richard Strauss, Arturo Toscanini, Guido Cantelli, Herbert von Karajan e Carlo Maria Giulini. L'Orchestra continua a collaborare con direttori e solisti di fama mondiale, oltre ad attrarre nelle sue fila i giovani musicisti europei di maggiore talento.

Orchestra Residente presso la Royal Festival Hall di Londra, occupa una posizione centrale nella vita musicale britannica anche attraverso residenze regionali che offrono un'opportunità ideale per espandere il suo dinamico programma educativo, basato sulle comunità. Vincitrice di numerosi premi, è stata lodata all'unanimità dai critici per la sua politica di programmazione particolarmente innovativa e fortemente incentrata sull'impegno ad eseguire e commissionare musiche nuove firmate dai maggiori compositori contemporanei.

I concerti dell'Orchestra sono trasmessi sempre più frequentemente da BBC Radio 3,

incluso l'apparizione annuale in occasione dei BBC Proms. La Philharmonia Orchestra gode di una reputazione a livello mondiale ed è l'orchestra sinfonica che ha inciso di più in tutto il mondo, con un catalogo di oltre 1000 incisioni, tra cui una serie di colonne sonore per film e televisione. La sua discografia include, per Opera Rara, numerosi dischi di recital, oltre a undici opere complete, e nella serie Opera in English per Chandos, sponsorizzata dalla Peter Moores Foundation, *The Thieving Magpie*, *Wozzeck*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Elixir of Love*, *Lucia of Lammermoor*, *Faust*, *Carmen*, *Aida*, *La Bohème*, *Madam Butterfly*, *Turandot*, la *Tosca*, vincitrice di un premio, e vari album di recital, con assoli di arie d'opera eseguite da Bruce Ford, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny e John Tomlinson. La Philharmonia Orchestra continua a consolidare la sua fama internazionale con frequenti tournèe e attraverso le recenti, prestigiose residenze presso il Châtelet Théâtre Musical di Parigi, il Megaron di Atene e il Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts di New York.

David Parry ha studiato con Sergiu Celibidache ed ha cominciato la sua carriera

come assistente di Sir John Pritchard. Ha debuttato all'English Music Theatre, quindi è diventato direttore d'orchestra presso la Städtische Bühnen di Dortmund e la Opera North. È stato Direttore Musicale di Opera 80 dal 1983 al 1987 e dal 1992 è stato Direttore Musicale fondatore dell'Opera di Almeida.

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

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

dirette comprendono il *Fidelio* al Festival della Nuova Zelanda, *Lucia di Lammermoor* alla New Israeli Opera e *Don Giovanni* alla Staatsoper di Hannover.

Il suo lavoro in studio di registrazione comprende la produzione della BBC di *Der Vampyr* di Marschner nonché ventotto registrazioni operistiche complete con il patrocinio della Peter Moores Foundation. Tra questi vi sono numerosi dischi per l'etichetta Opera Rara che hanno vinti parecchi premi, tra cui il belga Prix Cecilia per la *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* di Donizetti. Per Chandos ha diretto una serie di registrazioni di arie d'opera (con Sir Thomas Allen, Bruce Ford, Alan Opie, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny, John Tomlinson, Barry Banks, Della Jones e Andrew Shore), nonché *Fidelio*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *A Masked Ball*, *Idomeneo*, *Carmen*, *The Thieving Magpie*, *Don Giovanni*, *Don Pasquale*, *The Elixir of Love*, *Lucia of Lammermoor*, *Ernani*, *Il trovatore*, *Aida*, *Faust*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *La bohème*, *Turandot*, *Tosca* (vincitrice di un premio) e brani scelti da *Der Rosenkavalier*, tutte in collaborazione con la Peter Moores Foundation.

from Tannhäuser

Elizabeth's Greeting

Elizabeth

- [1] Great hall of song once more I greet you.
I honour you with all my heart.
You ring with echoes of his singing,
and waken me from dismal dreams.
Since he arose and left us
how empty you have seemed.
The peace I knew forsook me,
all pleasure fled from you.
But now my heart with joy is beating
and now your silent days are past.
For he who filled our lives with music,
he has returned to us at last.
Great hall of song.
I pay you homage,
Great hall of song,
I pay you homage will all my heart.

Wagner, translation by Rodney Blumer

from Don Giovanni

Donna Anna's Vengeance Aria

Recitative

Donna Anna

- [2] Don Ottavio, I'm dying!

Don Ottavio

What has happened?

Donna Anna

For pity's sake, you must rescue me!

Don Ottavio

My darling, try to have courage.

Donna Anna

God save me! God save me!
That is the murderer of my poor father!

Don Ottavio

What are you saying?

Donna Anna

Now there can be no doubt; those final words,
the way that villain spoke and the sound of his
voice, bring back fearsome memories of the
intruder who broke into my chamber...

Don Ottavio

Oh God! It is possible that he... beneath the
mantle of friendship... But tell me more...
Just tell me the truth of what has happened.

Donna Anna

Darkness had fallen. It was late in the evening,
when I was in my chamber all alone, as
misfortune would have it, I saw a man enter
with his cloak about him, a man who, for a
moment, I mistook for you; but very soon I
realised my eyes had deceived me.

Don Ottavio

Heavens! And then what?

Donna Anna

Silently he approaches, and attempts to embrace
me: I try to escape; he holds me fiercely: I'm
shouting. But no one hears; with one hand he
tires to stifle my cries, with the other he holds
me tight in his grasp, I dread that he will take me.

Don Ottavio

Treachery! And then?

Donna Anna

And then the shame, the horror of this dreadful
violation gives me the strength to repulse him,
by struggling, twisting, turning, fighting him, in
desperation, thus I escape him.

Don Ottavio

Oh God! What torture!

Donna Anna

So then I begin to shout once more, louder and
louder; the villain flees. I follow in pursuit out
into the street to try to stop him, so now the
prey turns on the hunter. My father approaches,
bravely challenges, but the villain, who was
stronger by far than my poor father, crowned all
his evil doing with bloody murder!

Aria

He threatened by honour,
attempted to rape me;
and that was the traitor
who slaughtered my father.
I beg you for vengeance,
your heart filled with rage.

Remember him wounded
and think of him falling;
the body, the bloodshed,
the sight was appalling;
don't ever forget him,
your heart filled with rage.

He threatened by honour *etc.*

Lorenzo da Ponte, translation by Amanda Holden

from Alceste

Alceste's Aria

Alceste

- [3] Almighty gods of death!
Immortal fiends of hell!
In your cruel embrace,
I'll die for ever grateful.
To save my husband's life,
mine is bid farewell:
my duty as a wife
who is ever faithful.
Almighty gods of death!
Immortal fiends of hell!
To die for my beloved,
is such a sweet farewell;
a loving gift so true and blissful.
My heart is filled with joy
as love casts a magic spell.
I fear not death however painful,
to save my husband from a fate so shameful.
My heart is filled with joy
as love casts a magic spell.

Almighty gods of death!
Immortal fiends of hell!
In your cruel embrace,
I'll die forever grateful.

*Marie François Louis and Louis Grand Leblanc Roullet
after Calzabigi, translation by Kenneth Richardson*

from Oberon

Reiza's Recitative and Aria

Recitative

- [4] Ocean! though mighty monster, thou liest curl'd
like some green serpent round about the world!
To musing eye thou art an awful sight,
when calmly sleeping in the morning light;
but when thou risest in thy wrath, as now,
and flingst thy folds around some fated prow,
crushing the strong-ribb'd bark as 'twere a reed,
then, Ocean, thou art terrible indeed!

Aria

Still I see thy billows flashing,
through the gloom their white foam flinging,
and the breakers' sullen dashing
in mine ear hope's knell is ringing!
But lo! methinks a light is breaking
slowly o'er the distant deep,
like a second morn awaking
pale and feeble from its sleep.
Brighter now, behold, 'tis beaming!

On the storm whose misty train
like some shatter'd flag is streaming,
or horse's wild and flying mane!
And now the sun bursts forth,
the wind is lulling fast,
and the broad wave but pants from fury past.
Cloudless o'er the blushing water
now the setting sun is burning,
like a victor, red with slaughter,
to his tent in triumph turning.
Ah, perchance these eyes may never
look upon its light again!
Fare thee well, bright orb, for ever,
thou for me will rise in vain.
But what gleams so white and fair,
heaving with the heaving billow?
'Tis a sea-bird, wheeling there
o'er some wretch's wat'ry pillow.
No, it is no bird I mark,
joy! it is a boat! A sail!
And yonder rides a gallant bark,
unimpaired by the gale!
Oh transport!
My Huon! haste down to the shore!
Quick, quick for a signal, this scarf shall be wav'd,
They see me! They answer! They ply the strong
oar!
Huon, Huon, Huon!
My husband, my love, we are sav'd!

*James Robinson Planché after Christoph Martin
Wieland's Oberon*

from The Golden Legend

Elsie's Song

Elsie

- [5] The night is calm and cloudless,
and still as still can be,
the stars come forth to listen,
to the music of the sea;
in snow-white robes uprising
the ghostly choirs respond,
and sadly and unceasing
the mournful voice sings on,...
And the snow-white choirs still answer
Christe eleison.

J. Bennett after Longfellow

from Euryanthe

Duet of Euryanthe and Eglantine

Euryanthe

- [6] Ah, what have I done?
Betrayed what Adolar kept secret?
God! I broke my sacred vow.

Eglantine

Dismiss your fears!

Euryanthe

Fading is the star that guides me;
dire foreboding holds me fast!

Eglantine

Fear no danger her beside me,
now that I have earned your trust!

Euryanthe

Ah! I broke my vow of silence!
Fading is the star that guides me.
Dire foreboding holds me fast!

Eglantine

In my arms find peace anew.
Love and comfort are waiting there for you.
Yes, you feel your heart awaken,
by my heart renewed;
know your trust will not be broken.
You are all I ask for, and only you.
Know your trust will not be broken,
I will find my all in you.

Euryanthe

Love and comfort, sweet and true,
love awaits me, sweet and true.
Yes, I feel my heart awaken,
gladly by your heart renewed;
you will keep my trust unbroken.
You are all I ask for, and only you.
You will keep my trust unbroken,
I will find my all in you.

*Helmina von Chezy,
translation by Christopher Cowell*

from Countess Maritza

Ensemble and Maritza's Entrance

Chorus

- [7] Gypsy airs in joyful phrases
gladly sing our lady's praises;
hear their merry voices!
When the lively syncopation
beats a festive invitation,
everyone rejoices!
Welcome home, Mariza!
Shout a toast from every corner
in the bride's especial honour;
keep the fountains flowing
with your finest Tokay!
Welcome home, Mariza!
Gypsy airs in joyful phrases
compliment Mariza's graces;
we will keep our spirits high
with a glass of fine Tokay!

Maritza

When I her the madly reeling
music of the violins,
hidden hopes and buried feelings
wake as the refrain begins.
Then a sultry Czardas dream
casts a spell upon the scene;
headlong, burning, reckless, yearning,
wild, alluring Czardas dream!

Chorus and Maritza

Then a sultry Czardas dream

casts a spell upon the scene:
headlong, burning, reckless, yearning,
wild, alluring Czardas dream!

Maritza

See the blood-red bubbles winking,
hear the Tokay glasses clinking,
do not waste your time in thinking;
play for me, Zigeuner!
Say the world will never part us,
offer me your eager heart as
gypsy lovers dance the Czardas;
play for me, Zigeuner!
Talk of love, its gentle aching,
drink until the dawn is waking
even as your heart is breaking;
play for me Zigeuner!
Play! Play! Play; tender, sad or gay!

Chorus

Tender, sad or gay!

Maritza

We are slaves and you're the master;
through our tears and through our laughter
gypsy rhythms lead the way.
Where is Love's kingdom?
Who knows the way there?
Where is Love's kingdom?
I long to stray there.
When will I hear my heart say 'no' to sorrow,
kiss and kiss, forget tomorrow;
one night of joy divine!

Maritza (and Chorus)

Where is love's kingdom?
Who can define it?
Where is Love's kingdom?
And who can find it?

Maritza

I long to kiss until my heart's desire
sets my very soul on fire,
one night of joy divine!
Just once to kiss until my heart's desire
sets my very soul on fire;
just one night of joy divine!

Maritza and Chorus

Just one night of joy divine!

*Julius Brammer and Alfred Grünwald,
translation by Christopher Cowell*

from Carousel

You'll Never Walk Alone

Chorus

- [8] On and on, walk on and on,
thru rain and storm,
you'll never walk alone.

Soloist then Chorus

When you walk thru a storm
hold you head up high,
and don't be afraid of the dark.

At the end of the storm is a golden sky
and the sweet silver song of a lark.
Walk on thru the wind,
walk on thru the rain,
tho' your dreams be tossed and blown,
walk on, walk on with hope in your heart
and you'll never walk alone
you'll never walk alone.

'You'll never walk alone.'

*Words by Oscar Hammerstein II and music by
Richard Rodgers.*

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from Giuditta

Giuditta's Aria

Giuditta

- [9] Why ever should it be
that men at once make love to me?
When they are near me,
there they stand.
Their eyes look deep in mine
they always kiss my hand.
Why ever should it be,
They speak of magic charms in me.
That no man can resist?
For ev'ry time they look at me
these charms persist.

But when the soft lights glint and glance
 As midnight hours go by,
 they hear me sing,
 they see me dance:
 it's then that I know why.
 On my lips ev'ry kiss is like wine:
 in my arms love is more than divine.
 It's engraved in the stars high above me;
 men must kiss me, men must love me.
 When my feet haunting rhythms inspire,
 In my eyes the gleam the flames of desire
 When I dance, then I know Fate's design.
 On my lips ev'ry kiss is like wine.

I have a dancer's blood,
 that rules me like a throbbing flood.
 My mother was the dancing star
 without a rival at the golden Alcazar.
 How great she must have been!
 In dreams I have so often seen
 the raptures when she danced
 she held each heart enthralled
 and ev'ry eye entranced.
 Her spirit wakes in me again,
 my fortune wills it so.
 At night I dance as she did then,
 and this is all I know.
 On my lips ev'ry kiss is like wine:
 in my arms love is more than divine.
 It's engraved in the stars high above me;
 men must kiss me, men must love me.

Chorus

When her feet haunting rhythms inspire,
 in her eyes gleam the flames of desire.

Giuditta

When I dance, then I know Fate's design.
 On my lips ev'ry kiss is like wine.

*Operetta by Paul Knepler and Fritz Löhmer.
 English version by Geoffrey Dunn.
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from Stabat Mater

Aria and Chorus

Soprano

- [10] Blessed virgin,
 may the flame of love eternal
 be my shield from fires infernal
 on that dreadful day of judgment,
 when I go to meet my god.

Chorus

That great day of reckoning,
 when I go to meet my god.

Soprano and chorus

May the holy cross prepare me;
 may our Saviour's death inspire me;
 may the radiant grace of heaven
 now and ever guard my soul.

translation by David Parry

Ah! perfido

Scena

- [11] Ah! treachery and falsehood!
 Deaf to my anguished cries, you leave me?
 Are these lame excuses your words of parting?
 How can you bear to deal me such a cruel blow?
 Go, wretched creature! Go, escape while you
 may!

But you will never escape heavenly anger!
 And if the gods are just, if they are kind,
 they will conspire as rivals to see you punished!
 They shall avenge me!
 Wherever you are hiding your torment will
 inspire me...

It gives me pleasure to imagine the thunderbolts
 of heaven rain down on you in fury...

Ah no! Ah no!

You gods of vengeance, be patient!
 Spare the man that I love:
 the pain is mine now!
 Though I mean nothing to him,
 I can't forget him;
 I lived for his sake and I shall die without him.

Aria

Ah, my love, how can you leave me,
 leave me here to weep and sigh?
 You must know that I will suffer,
 that in torment I will die.
 Ah, you scorn my tears of anguish!
 Are you glad that I should die?

You reject the love I offer
 and you laugh to see me cry?
 Gods in heav'n, am I not worthy
 of compassion in my plight?

Metastasio, translation by David Parry

from Carnival

Lili's Song

- [12] I came on two buses and a train.
 Can you imagine that?
 Can you imagine that?
 Two buses and a train.
 Would you believe, this is the first I've travelled.
 I came from a town, the kind of town
 where you live in a house, 'til the house falls down,
 But if it stands up, you stay there.
 It's funny but that's the way there.
 I come from the the town of Mira
 beyond the bridges of Saint Claire.
 I guess you've never heard of Mira,
 it's very small but still it's there.
 They have the very greenest trees
 and skies as bright as flame.
 But what I liked the best in Mira,
 is ev'rybody knew my name.
 Can you imagine that?
 Can you imagine that?
 Ev'rybody knew my name.
 A room that's strange is never cosy,
 a place that's strange is never sweet.

I want to have a chair that knows me,
and walk a street that knows my feet.
I'm very far from Mira now,
and there's no turning back.
I have to find a place,
I've got to find a place
where ev'rything can be the same.
A street that I can know,
and places I can go
where ev'rybody knows my name.

Can you imagine that?
Can you imagine that?
Ev'rybody knows my name.

Words and Music by Bob Merrill

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On session:
David Parry and Christine Brewer

Christine Brewer as the
Countess in The Royal Opera's
production of Mozart's
The Marriage of Figaro



Clive Barda/ArenaPAL

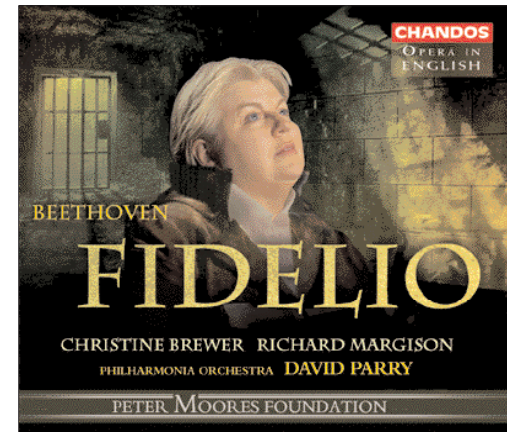
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CHAN 3099	Yvonne Kenny 2	CHAN 3105	Dennis O'Neill 2
CHAN 3049	Della Jones	CHAN 3085	Alan Opie
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CHAN 3006	Bruce Ford	CHAN 3076	John Tomlinson 2
CHAN 3100	Bruce Ford 2	CHAN 3078	Baroque Celebration

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Beethoven
Fidelio



Christine Brewer as Queen Elizabeth I
in Opera Theatre of St Louis'
production of Britten's *Gloriana*

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Operas administrator Sue Shortridge
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GREAT OPERATIC ARIAS

CHANDOS DIGITAL**CHAN 3127**

Christine Brewer

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 Richard Wagner
<i>from Tannhäuser</i>
'Great hall of song' 4:55</p> <p>2 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
<i>from Don Giovanni</i>
'He threatened my honour'
with Barry Banks tenor 6:14</p> <p>3 Christoph Willibald Gluck
<i>from Alceste</i>
'Almighty gods of death!' 4:41</p> <p>4 Carl Maria von Weber
<i>from Oberon</i>
'Ocean! Thou mighty monster' 8:49</p> <p>5 Sir Arthur Sullivan
<i>from The Golden Legend</i>
'The night is calm and cloudless'
with Geoffrey Mitchell Choir 5:09</p> <p>6 Carl Maria von Weber
<i>from Euryanthe</i>
'Fading is the star that guides me'
with Janice Watson soprano 3:59</p> | <p>7 Emmerich Kálmán
<i>from Countess Maritza</i>
'Where is love's kingdom?'
with Geoffrey Mitchell Choir 6:54</p> <p>8 Richard Rodgers
<i>from Carousel</i>
'You'll never walk alone'
with Geoffrey Mitchell Choir 4:01</p> <p>9 Franz Lehár
<i>from Giuditta</i>
'On my lips ev'ry kiss is like wine'
with Geoffrey Mitchell Choir 5:45</p> <p>10 Gioachino Rossini
<i>from Stabat Mater (Inflamatus)</i>
'Blessed virgin, may the flame of love'
with Geoffrey Mitchell Choir 4:19</p> <p>11 Ludwig van Beethoven
Concert Aria: 'Ah! perfido' 13:16</p> <p>12 Bob Merrill
<i>from Carnival</i>
'Mira - Can you imagine that?' 4:26</p> |
|--|---|

TT 73:52

Philharmonia Orchestra • David Parry
with Geoffrey Mitchell Choir • Barry Banks • Janice Watson

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