



CHAN 3142

GREAT OPERATIC ARIAS

CHANDOS
OPERA IN
ENGLISH

Jennifer
Larmore
mezzo-soprano

Philharmonia Orchestra **David Parry**

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION



© Ken Howard

Great Operatic Arias with Jennifer Larmore



	Time	Page
Francesco Cilea (1866–1950) <i>from</i> Adriana Lecouvreur Princess of Bouillon's aria		
[1] 'The torment of desire, exquisite torture' – 'Star of the Evening' (O vagabonda stella d'oriente)	4:18	[p. 56]
 Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848) <i>from</i> La favorita (The Mistress) Leonora's aria		
[2] 'Can I believe it?' – 'Oh my beloved' – 'I submit to heav'nly powers!' (O, mio Fernando)	8:02	[p. 56]
 Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) <i>from</i> Il trovatore (The Troubadour) Azucena's canzone		
[3] 'Fierce flames are raging' (Stride la vampa)	2:54	[p. 57]

	Time	Page
Amilcare Ponchielli (1834–1886) <i>from</i> La Gioconda Gioconda and Laura's duet		
[4] 'My curse upon you!' – 'Love like mine is the light of creation' (L'amo come il fulgor del creato) with Susan Patterson soprano	3:43	[p. 57]
 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) <i>from</i> Don Giovanni Donna Elvira's recitative and aria		
[5] 'To what atrocity' – 'That ungrateful man betrayed me' (Mi tradi)	5:46	[p. 58]
 Richard Wagner (1813–1883) <i>from</i> Rienzi Adriano's scena		
[6] 'Oh righteous God' – 'Where was I?' (Wo war ich?)	9:19	[p. 59]



Time Page

Gaetano Donizetti

from La favorita

Leonora and Fernando's duet

- [7] 'You, most courteous maiden' –
'My beloved'
(Ah, mio bene)

with Colin Lee tenor and Fflur Wyn soprano

10:26 [p. 60]

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

from Semele

Juno's aria

- [8] 'Hence, Iris hence away!'

3:40 [p. 62]

Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868)

from Tancredi

Tancredi's Aria

- [9] 'Tell me, my beating heart'
(Di tanti palpiti)

2:56 [p. 63]

Time Page

Vincenzo Bellini (1801–1835)

from Norma

Norma and Adalgisa's Duet

- [10] 'Take my children' –
'See, O Norma'
(Mira, O Norma)
with Susan Patterson soprano

10:49 [p. 63]

Giuseppe Verdi

from Don Carlos

Princess Eboli's aria

- [11] 'O hated gift'
(O don fatale)

4:35 [p. 64]

Charles Gounod (1818–1893)

from Romeo and Juliet

Juliet's Waltz Song

- [12] (Je veux vivre)

3:44 [p. 65]

TT 71:27

Philharmonia Orchestra

Gareth Hancock assistant conductor

David Parry



Jennifer Larmore in the title role of Rossini's *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra* at the Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires



Jennifer Larmore in the title role of the Metropolitan Opera's production of Rossini's *La Cenerentola*

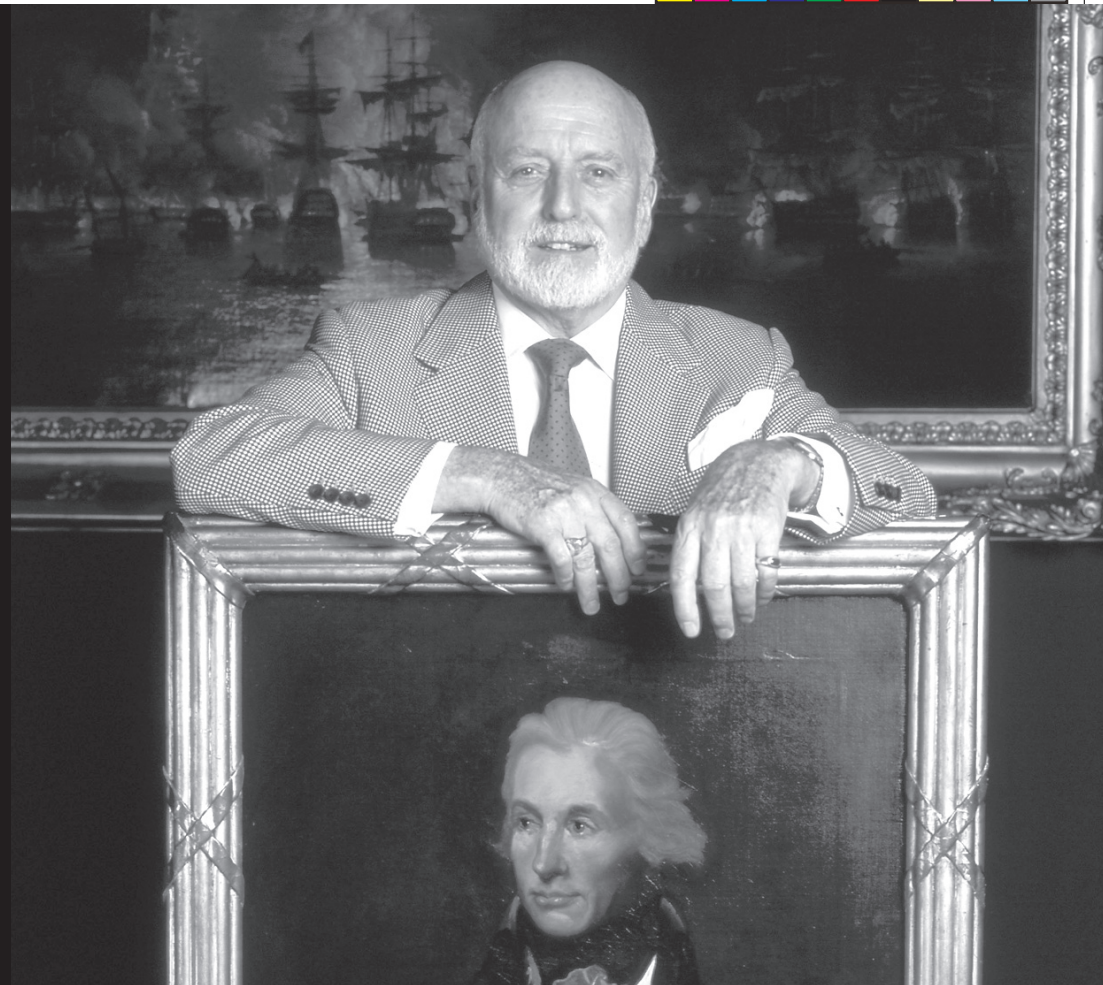


It was a delight to make this recording with American mezzo-soprano Jennifer Larmore for our Opera in English recital series. Renowned on both sides of the Atlantic for her spirited portrayals of *bel canto* heroes and heroines (and villains!), here she reveals her versatility further in a wide-ranging series of arias and duets from Mozart to Cilea. Please ‘dip in’ and discover for yourself the many pleasures this collection has to offer.

Peter Moores

Sir Peter Moores, CBE, DL
April 2007

Sir Peter Moores with a portrait of Admiral Lord Nelson
by Lemuel Francis Abbott, acquired for Compton Verney
© Lyndon Parker





Great Operatic Arias

Jennifer Larmore is designated a 'mezzo-soprano', but that term seems barely adequate to describe an artist of the range and versatility demonstrated on this recital disc – after all, it is not every mezzo who sings Juliet's Waltz Song from Gounod's opera. In a career of twenty years Larmore has traversed the whole gamut of the operatic repertoire, from the Baroque to the contemporary, and proved herself amongst the most popular and admired of American singers, and one who is made more than welcome in all the major opera houses of the world.

She was born in Atlanta, Georgia, and studied at Princeton and, significantly, with Regina Resnik, another singer who crossed accepted soprano-to-mezzo-to-contralto boundaries. Like many American singers in earlier days – happily this is no longer the pattern – she had a substantial and successful career in Europe before becoming a star in her homeland. She made her professional debut in 1986 in Nice as Sesto in *La clemenza di Tito*, and stayed with the company for three years, demonstrating her versatility with Donizetti's Giovanna Seymour and Rossini's Isolier. Then

came Rosina in the *Barber*, from then on one of her signature roles. She says she still sings it in as many as five different productions a year, and will continue to do so until people stop asking her – fat chance. This was the role of her Met debut in 1995, following Bellini's Romeo in concert in New York the previous year and winning the prestigious Richard Tucker Award. Since then she has been a Met regular, in the title roles of *Giulio Cesare* and *La Cenerentola*, as Isabella in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, as Humperdinck's Hansel, and in 2005 appearing there in the premiere Tobias Picker's *An American Tragedy*.

Her list of recordings is bewilderingly wide-ranging, from Handel's *Giulio Cesare* to *Carmen*, from Gluck's *Orfeo* to Rossini's *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra*, with much rare Donizetti, Pacini and Rossini in between. Early Baroque music, a disc of French arias, unknown Vivaldi, she has done it all. Her Rosina can be seen on DVD in the famous Dario Fo production, where the sense of humour that is so much part of her make-up as an artist is much in evidence, and of course her film-star looks have been no hindrance to

her career. She has her own radio show in the USA, and is a valued ambassador for UNICEF, having inherited her parents' concern for the underprivileged. How does she fit it all in?

But versatility is perhaps her over-riding quality, as all that follows shows more than clearly.

La favorita (The Mistress) is a late work, written for Paris in 1840 and within five years performed all over Europe and in the USA. It was popular well into the twentieth century in France, and survives in Italy in its (slightly altered) Italian version. The setting is fourteenth-century Castile. Fernando, the tenor hero, is a novice monk who has renounced his vows, having fallen in love with an unknown woman. There are two extracts from this fine, very carefully composed opera. In the second (track [7]) Fernando questions the evasive maid Ines about his beloved Leonora's identity. Leonora herself is no more communicative as they rapturously declare their love. Her secret, hinted at in an agonised aside, is that she is the long-standing mistress of King Alfonso XI. At their parting, she gives Fernando a military commission, and in the course of the opera he attains military glory and is rewarded by the King with the prize of any wife of his choice – he of course

chooses the mysterious Leonora. Larmore's recital includes Leonora's guilt-stricken aria just before the wedding: what will Fernando's reaction be when he finds out about her past? The cavatina, (track [2]) launched by horns and harp, is one of Donizetti's most suave and seamless melodies, and the ensuing cabaletta is appropriately rip-roaring. The opera ends unhappily: the ceremony of Fernando, having returned to the bosom of the church, taking his final vows is interrupted by the repentant, mortally-ill Leonora's coming to die in his arms.

Francesco Cilea's **Adriana Lecouvreur** (Milan, 1902) is based on both fact and a somewhat overheated melodrama by Eugène Scribe. Lecouvreur was a famous eighteenth-century actress, and her lover of the moment, Maurice, Maréchal de Saxe was likewise a historical figure (the marble slab on which his body was embalmed may be seen in the Château de Chambord). But Maurice has a discarded mistress, the Princess of Bouillon, and in this extract (track [1]) she waits in fevered anticipation for his arrival at a secret rendezvous. Has he betrayed her? Of course, but the Princess gets the final word by sending Adriana a bunch of violets sprinkled with poison which, fatally, she inhales.



Tancredi (Venice, 1813), based on Voltaire's tragedy, was Rossini's first great *opera seria*, an instant success and seldom out of the repertoire ever since. Legend has it that every errand boy in Venice was soon whistling the tune of 'Di tanti palpiti', and its fame soon spread throughout Europe – Wagner briefly quoted it in the procession of guilds and apprentices in *Die Meistersinger*. It was also, surely, one of Rossini's conscious *hommages* to Mozart: both the plucked accompaniment and the sudden modulation echo Cherubino's 'Voi che sapete'. The title role was written for a contralto, and here (track [9]) the hero, exiled from his native Sicily, returns home and looks forward excitedly to being reunited with Amenaide, the woman he loves. Predictably the course of true love does not run smooth, and Rossini composed both a happy and a tragic end. No two Rossinians can agree on which is the more appropriate.

Wagner's early Grand Opera **Rienzi** (Dresden, 1842) remained, somewhat to his embarrassment, one of his most popular works throughout the nineteenth century – he soon outgrew such overblown Meyerbeerian formulae. But the five-act score, based on Bulwer-Lytton's popular historical novel, contains much fine music. The 'last tribune' of

Rome, Rienzi, seeks unsuccessfully to reconcile patricians and plebeians. The young nobleman Adriano Colonna, written for mezzo-soprano, supports him and is in love with his sister Irene. When the patricians conspire against Rienzi, Adriano is torn between loyalty to Rienzi and to his family, a conflict powerfully expressed in his intensely dramatic two-part scena 'Oh righteous God' (track [8]), clearly inspired by Wagner's admiration for *Fidelio*, and it is by no means coincidental that the first singer of Adriano, Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient, was the artist Wagner especially admired as Beethoven's Leonore.

Even taking into account British audiences' suspicions of foreigners daring to lay hands on Shakespeare, Gounod's setting of **Romeo and Juliet** (Paris, 1867) is by no means unworthy of its source – it contains many passages of truly inspired music. Juliet's Waltz Song (track [12]) from the first act expresses her teenage *joie de vivre*, shortly before meeting Romeo. The creator of the role, Marie Miolan Carvalho, made a speciality of Waltz Songs and, since she was married to the Théâtre Lyrique's director, was in a strong position to insist upon them in new operas. This one, unlike some others (*Mireille*, *Faust*), does no damage to the dramatic fabric.

Bellini's masterpiece **Norma** (Milan, 1831) is perhaps the ultimate icon of *bel canto* opera, and at its centre is 'Mira o Norma' (track [10]), a prime example, much imitated, of the romantic duet for two sopranos. In the first act the Druid priestess Norma has discovered that her secret lover and the father of her two children, the Roman proconsul Pollione, has betrayed her with her fellow priestess Adalgisa, whom he intends to take with him to Rome. In the second act the distraught Norma contemplates killing her children, but is unable to go through with it. In the first part of her duet with Adalgisa she orders her rival to take the children with her to Rome and cherish them. But Adalgisa, who until now knows nothing of Pollione's treachery, refuses. Loyalty to Norma comes first, and she vows to persuade the Roman to return to his first love ('See, O Norma'). The third part of the duet ('Now and forever') is a lively *allegro* with brilliant coloratura and much fired by optimism.

The Princess Eboli in **Don Carlos** (Paris, 1867) is, along with Amneris and Azucena, one of Verdi's most powerful roles for mezzo-soprano. Morally flawed, as in the play by Schiller on which the opera is closely based, she has been King Philip II's mistress

but is now infatuated with his son Carlos. Discovering that Carlos is in love with his stepmother Elisabeth, she has jealously conveyed to the King evidence of his wife's affection for her stepson, but is now consumed with guilt. In her bravura aria 'O hated gift' (track [11]) she curses her own beauty, shows remorse for having wronged Elisabeth, and in the final outburst determines to rescue Carlos from prison – which she does in the following scene of insurrection. But, in one of Verdi's bleakest scenarios, the Inquisition has the last word.

Handel called his **Semele** (London, 1744) 'The Story of Semele' and it is officially designated 'after the manner of an oratorio'. But as the composer's colleague Charles Jennens rightly noted, it is in fact 'a bawdy opera', about sexual shenanigans and little else – no wonder it remained unstaged until the twentieth century. With a libretto by Congreve, it must be the greatest operatic comedy set to the English language, composed with the utmost sophistication and sly wit. Jupiter has abducted the flighty, ambitious Semele on her wedding day and installed her in a pleasure palace, guarded by a fierce dragon. His jealous wife Juno is not amused. In 'Hence, Iris hence away' (track [8]) she



orders her confidante to join her in headlong flight to visit Somnus, the surprisingly lecherous god of sleep. Juno plans to bribe him with the attentions of a complaisant nymph to send the dragon into a deep slumber and thus gain access to Semele's palace and encompass her downfall. The pompous and impetuous characterization of Juno through her music is one of Handel's happiest conceits.

Donna Elvira is just one of the 2,065 women the protagonist of **Don Giovanni** (Prague, 1787) has seduced and abandoned, but Mozart's music marks her out as someone rather special. In the first (Prague) version of the opera, she could conceivably be played as a comic character – a silly, rather hysterical woman. But for the first performance in Vienna a year later the composer gave Elvira an extra aria, written for the 'golden throat' of Mme Cavalieri, mistress of Salieri, who had earlier created the role of Constanze. 'That ungrateful man betrayed me' (track [5]) significantly changes the character, adding a completely new dimension to her. The tenderness, the compassion that the music brings to her introductory recitative shows us a woman with great depth of feeling: for all Giovanni's appalling treatment of her she loves him still, and always will. Mozart knew, understood, and loved women.

The scenario of *Don Carlos* may be bleak, but that devised by Verdi and his librettist for **Il trovatore** (The Troubador, Rome, 1853) is bleaker still – there seems to be no hope whatsoever for the human race. After the rousing Anvil Chorus, without a break, the gypsy Azucena remembers as if in a trance the day she witnessed the burning alive of her mother, falsely accused of witchcraft (track [3]). Her song is greeted with little more than embarrassed silence – they have surely heard it often before – and a reprise of the chorus. That barbaric act was the first step in a headlong cycle of violence and revenge that will culminate in unwitting fratricide – Azucena engineers the murder by his real brother of the foster-child she has carefully nurtured with such an outcome in mind. Indeed, no hope...

Ponchielli's **La Gioconda** (Milan, 1876) is almost as important for its influence as it is for its music *per se*. The plot, drastically reduced by the librettist Arrigo Boito (understandably under an anagrammatic pseudonym) from a play by Victor Hugo, verges on melodrama and near-incoherence, but the fact that the leading roles are enormously rewarding both vocally and dramatically has ensured the work its place in the repertoire. The heroine of the title is simple ballad singer who loves the tenor

Enzo Grimaldi, a Genoese nobleman living in Venice disguised as a seaman. Enzo has been romantically involved with Laura, now the wife of a powerful Venetian senator, and an assignation has been arranged on his ship. While he is temporarily absent, Gioconda arrives on board, and in a fierce duet (track [4]) the two women go at each other hammer and tongs for possession of the man they both love. This viscerally exiting music shows to what extent Ponchielli had broken away from the accepted operatic patterns of the time, and his influence on the emergent blood-and-guts school of Mascagni and Leoncavallo – not to mention on his pupil Puccini – is plain to hear.

© 2007 Rodney Milnes

Douglas Robertson



her performances in the coloratura roles of

the baroque and *bel canto*. Following her European debut in *La clemenza di Tito* in 1986, she quickly established herself as an emerging star. She has been particularly associated with the role of Rosina (*The Barber of Seville*), which she has performed at the Metropolitan Opera, the Staatsoper in Berlin, in Bonn, Paris, San Francisco and Buenos Aires.

Other roles include Giovanna Seymour (*Anna Bolena*) in Nice; Mélisande (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) in Marseilles; Isolier (*Le Comte Ory*) at La Scala, Milan; Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*) at the Salzburg Festival; Romeo (*I Capuleti e i Montecchi*) at New York's Carnegie Hall, at the Opéra de Paris-Bastille and in Geneva; *The Italian Girl in Algiers* at the Deutsche Oper, Berlin and in Paris and Vienna; Ruggiero (*Alcina*) with Chicago Lyric Opera; Sesto (*La clemenza di Tito*) at the Gran Teatro del Liceu in Barcelona; the title role in *Carmen* with Washington Opera; *Giulio Cesare* at the Metropolitan Opera and in Madrid; the title role in *Orfeo* in Madrid; Orlovsky (*Die Fledermaus*) in Japan and at the Metropolitan Opera, Hansel (*Hansel and Gretel*) at the Metropolitan Opera and the BBC Proms concerts; Giulietta (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) at the Royal Opera House,



Covent Garden, and the title role in *La Cenerentola* at the Metropolitan Opera.

Recital and symphonic repertoire has played a large role in Jennifer Larmore's career, with repertoire including Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, *Rückertlieder* and Third Symphony, Berlioz's *Nuits d'été*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*, under the direction of conductors such as Riccardo Muti, Leonard Bernstein, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Kurt Masur, Sir Charles Mackerras, Seiji Ozawa and Donald Runnicles. She was also selected to close the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games with the singing of the Olympic Hymn, and in 2002, she was appointed a *Chevalier de l'ordre des arts et des lettres* in recognition of her contribution to the world of music.

Jennifer Larmore has made over seventy recordings to date, something which has earned her the distinction of being the most recorded mezzo-soprano of all time. These recordings include *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Julius Caesar*, *Orfeo*, *The Barber of Seville*, *La Cenerentola*, and, for Opera Rara, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, *Bianca e Falliero*, *Elisabetta regina d'Inghilterra*, *Francesca di Foix*, and *Adelaide di Borgogna*.

One of the world's great orchestras, the **Philharmonia Orchestra** is now in its tenth 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 numerous complete operas, and for Chandos, in the Opera in English series sponsored by the Peter Moores Foundation, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *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 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 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 more than thirty 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 *Nabucco*, *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.



On session: Jennifer Larmore





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 millions of pounds 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 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 I 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 at the same time was an assistant producer with the Vienna State Opera, working 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

Jennifer Larmore wird als Mezzosopranistin bezeichnet, doch diese Klassifizierung erscheint kaum angemessen zur Beschreibung einer Sängerin mit einem solchen Tonumfang und von der Vielseitigkeit wie sie auf dieser Recital-CD dargeboten werden – schließlich singt nicht jeder Mezzo Julius Walzerlied aus Gounods bekannter Oper. In ihrer zwanzigjährigen künstlerischen Laufbahn hat Jennifer Larmore die gesamte Bandbreite des Opernrepertoires durchschritten – vom Zeitalter des Barock bis zur Moderne – und sich dabei als eine der populärsten und meistbewunderten amerikanischen Sängerinnen erwiesen; heute ist sie an allen großen Opernhäusern der Welt jederzeit mehr als willkommen.

Jennifer Larmore wurde in Atlanta (Georgia) geboren und studierte in Princeton sowie – bemerkenswerterweise – bei Regina Resnik, die ebenfalls die üblichen Grenzen zwischen Sopran, Mezzosopran und Alt überschritten hat. Wie so viele amerikanische Sänger in der Vergangenheit – heute ist dies zum Glück nicht mehr die Regel – baute sie sich zunächst in Europa eine solide und erfolgreiche Karriere

auf, bevor sie in ihrer Heimat zum Star wurde. Ihr professionelles Debüt feierte sie 1986 in Nizza als Sesto in *La clemenza di Tito* und war danach drei Jahre lang Mitglied des Ensembles, wo sie ihre Vielseitigkeit mit Donizettis Giovanna Seymour und Rossinis Isolier unter Beweis stellte. Es folgte Rosina im *Barbier*, die zu einer ihrer Standardrollen werden sollte. Wie sie selber sagt, singt sie diese Partie immer noch in fünf unterschiedlichen Inszenierungen pro Jahr und wird dies auch weiterhin tun, bis man aufhört, ihr diese Rolle anzubieten – was aber schwerlich geschehen wird. Die Rosina sang sie auch bei ihrem Debüt an der Met im Jahr 1995, wofür sie mit dem begehrten Richard Tucker Award ausgezeichnet wurde; im Jahr zuvor hatte sie in New York eine konzertante Aufführung von Bellinis Romeo gegeben. Seither hat sie regelmäßig an der Met gearbeitet, so in den Titelrollen von *Giulio Cesare* und *La Cenerentola*, als Isabella in *L'italiana in Algeri*, als Humperdincks Hänsel sowie 2005 in der Premiere von Tobias Pickers *An American Tragedy*.

Die Liste ihrer Einspielungen zeigt eine verblüffende Vielfalt, sie reicht von Handels

Giulio Cesare bis *Carmen*, von Glucks *Orfeo* bis Rossinis *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra*; hinzu kommen zahlreiche selten gehörte Werke von Donizetti, Pacini und Rossini. Frühe Barockmusik, eine CD mit französischen Arien, unbekannte Werke von Vivaldi – sie hat alles gemacht. Ihre Rosina kann man in der berühmten Inszenierung von Dario Fo auf DVD sehen, wo ihr Sinn für Humor – ein fester Bestandteil ihrer künstlerischen Persönlichkeit – sehr deutlich hervortritt; und auch ihr Filmstar-Aussehen bedeutete für ihre Karriere natürlich kein Hindernis. In den USA hat sie ihre eigene Radio-Show und ist eine hochgeschätzte UNICEF-Botschafterin; in dieser Hinsicht hat sie die karitativen Interessen ihrer Eltern geerbt. Wie schafft sie es nur, all dies unter einen Hut zu bringen?

Doch die Vielseitigkeit ist vielleicht ihre hervorragendste Eigenschaft, wie die hier präsentierte Recital-CD eindrucksvoll demonstriert.

La favorita ist ein spätes Werk; es entstand 1840 für eine Aufführung in Paris und wurde innerhalb von fünf Jahren in ganz Europa und den USA dargeboten. In Frankreich war die Oper bis weit ins zwanzigste Jahrhundert populär, und in Italien hat sie sich in der (leicht geänderten) italienischen Fassung bis

heute gehalten. Die Handlung spielt im 14. Jahrhundert in Kastilien. Der Protagonist Fernando (Tenor) hat als Novize seinem Ordensgelübde abgeschworen, weil er sich in eine Unbekannte verliebt hat. Auf der CD finden sich zwei Ausschnitte aus dieser exzellenten, sehr sorgfältig komponierten Oper. In dem zweiten (Band 7) befragt Fernando die ausweichend antwortende Magd Inez nach der Identität seiner geliebten Leonora. Leonora selbst ist auch nicht gesprächiger, als die beiden sich verzückt ihre Liebe gestehen. Ihr Geheimnis wird in einem qualvollen Apart enthüllt – sie ist seit langem die Mätresse von König Alfonso XI. Als sie auseinandergehen, gibt sie Fernando einen militärischen Auftrag; so gelingt es ihm, im Verlauf der Oper militärische Ehren zu erwerben. Der König verspricht ihm als Preis die Frau seiner Wahl und er wählt natürlich die mysteriöse Leonora. Larmores Recital enthält auch Leonoras schuldbewußte Arie unmittelbar vor der Vermählung: Wie wird Fernando reagieren, wenn er von ihrer Vergangenheit erfährt? Die von Hörnern und Harfe eingeleitete Cavatina (Band 2) ist eine von Donizettis süßesten und eingängigsten Melodien, während die nachfolgende Cabaletta entsprechend temperamentvoll ist. Die Oper endet tragisch:



Die Zeremonie, in der der in den Schoß der Kirche zurückgekehrte Fernando sein letztes Gelübde ablegt, wird unterbrochen von der reuigen, todkranken Leonora, die gekommen ist, um in seinen Armen zu sterben.

Francesco Cileas **Adriana Lecouvreur** (Mailand 1902) beruht teils auf Tatsachen und entstammt teils einem etwas überhitzten Melodram von Eugène Scribe. Lecouvreur war eine berühmte Schauspielerin des 18. Jahrhunderts, und auch bei ihrem Geliebten – Maurice, Maréchal de Saxe – handelt es sich um eine historische Person (die Marmorplatte, auf der sein Leichnam einbalsamiert wurde, kann man im Château de Chambord besichtigen). Doch Maurice hat eine ehemalige Geliebte, die Princesse de Bouillon, die in dem hier vorgestellten Ausschnitt (Band [9]) fieberhaft sein Eintreffen zu einem heimlichen Stelldichein erwartet. Hat er sie etwa betrogen? Natürlich hat er das, doch die Prinzessin hat das letzte Wort – sie schickt Adriana ein mit Gift bestreutes Sträußchen Veilchen, das diese fatalerweise einatmet.

Tancredi (Venedig 1813) basiert auf der gleichnamigen Tragödie von Voltaire und war Rossinis erste große *opera seria*; das Werk wurde ein unmittelbarer Erfolg und hat seither nur selten auf dem Spielplan

gefehlt. Der Legende nach piff bald jeder Botenjunge in Venedig die Melodie von “Di tanti palpiti”, und der Ruhm der Oper verbreitete sich rasch in ganz Europa – selbst Wagner zitiert sie kurz in der Prozession der Gilden und Lehrlinge in den *Meistersingern*. Offensichtlich handelt es sich hier auch um eine von Rossinis bewußten Hommages an Mozart – sowohl die gezupfte Begleitung als auch die plötzliche Modulation erinnern an Cherubinos “Voi che sapete”. Die Titelrolle wurde für eine Altstimme geschrieben. In der hier präsentierten Szene (Band [9]) kehrt der aus seiner Heimat Sizilien verbannte Held nach Hause zurück und erwartet freudig erregt das Wiedersehen mit der von ihm geliebten Amenaide. Es ist vorherzusehen, daß die wahre Liebe keinen glatten Verlauf nehmen wird, und tatsächlich komponierte Rossini ein glückliches und ein tragisches Ende. Keine zwei Rossinianer können sich einigen, welches das angemessenere ist.

Wagners frühe Große Oper **Rienzi** (Dresden 1842) blieb – zu seiner nicht geringen Verlegenheit – während des gesamten 19. Jahrhunderts eine seiner beliebtesten Kompositionen, obwohl er schon bald diese Art von verblühter Formelhaftigkeit à la Meyerbeer überwandt. Das auf Edward

Bulwer-Lyttons populärem historischen Roman basierende fünftaktige Werk enthält jedoch viele musikalische Höhepunkte. Der “letzte Tribun” von Rom, Rienzi, unternimmt den erfolglosen Versuch, die Patrizier mit den Plebejern zu versöhnen. Unterstützt wird er von dem jungen Adligen Adriano Colonna (Mezzosopran), der seine Schwester Irene liebt. Als die Patrizier sich gegen Rienzi verschwören, sieht Adriano sich zwischen seiner Loyalität gegenüber Rienzi und der gegenüber seiner eigenen Familie zerrissen – ein Konflikt, der sich kraftvoll in seiner hochdramatischen zweiteiligen Szene “Gerechter Gott” (Band [9]) entlädt, die eindeutig von Wagners Bewunderung des *Fidelio* inspiriert ist; und es kann kaum als Zufall gesehen werden, daß die erste Interpretin des Adriano, Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient, von Wagner ganz besonders in der Rolle von Beethovens Leonore bewundert wurde.

Selbst wenn man das grundsätzliche Mißtrauen des britischen Publikums gegenüber fremden Bearbeitungen von Shakespeare berücksichtigt, ist Gounods Vertonung von **Romeo und Julia** (Paris 1867) keineswegs ihrer Vorlage unwürdig – sie enthält zahlreiche Passagen wahrhaft inspirierter Musik. Julias Walzerlied (Band [12]) aus dem ersten Akt

bringt ihre jugendliche *joie de vivre* kurz vor ihrer ersten Begegnung mit Romeo zum Ausdruck. Die erste Interpretin dieser Rolle, Marie Miolan Carvalho, hatte sich auf Walzerlieder spezialisiert, und da sie mit dem Direktor des Théâtre Lyrique verheiratet war, hatte sie keine Schwierigkeiten, deren Aufnahme in neue Opern zu veranlassen. Im Gegensatz zu anderen (*Mireille*, *Faust*) fügt das hier eingespielte Stück dem dramatischen Gewebe keinen Schaden zu.

Bellinis Meisterwerk **Norma** (Mailand 1831) ist vielleicht die ultimative Ikone der Belcanto-Oper, und in ihrem Zentrum steht “Mira o Norma” (Band [10]), ein häufig nachgeahmtes erstklassiges Beispiel des romantischen Duets für zwei Soprane. Im ersten Akt hat die Druidenpriesterin Norma entdeckt, daß ihr heimlicher Geliebter und Vater ihrer beiden Kinder, der römische Proconsul Pollione, sie mit ihrer Mitpriesterin Adalgisa betrogen hat, die er nach Rom mitzunehmen gedenkt. Im zweiten Akt erwägt die verzweifelte Norma, ihre Kinder umzubringen, ist jedoch nicht in der Lage, diesen Plan durchzuführen. Im ersten Teil ihres Duets mit Adalgisa befiehlt sie ihrer Rivalin, die Kinder mit nach Rom zu nehmen und dort für sie zu sorgen. Doch Adalgisa, die bis dahin noch nichts von Polliones Verrat



weiß, lehnt dies ab. Ihre Loyalität gegenüber Norma hat Vorrang und sie schwört, den Römer zu überreden, zu seiner ersten Liebe zurückzukehren (“Siehe, o Norma”). Der dritte Teil des Duets (“Für immer und ewig”) ist ein lebhaftes Allegro mit brillanten Koloraturen und von großem Optimismus getragen.

Die Prinzessin Eboli in **Don Carlos** (Paris 1867) ist neben der Amneris und der Azucena eine von Verdis kraftvollsten Rollen für Mezzosopran. Wie in Schillers gleichnamigem Schauspiel, an dessen Handlung sich die Oper eng anlehnt, ist Eboli mit einem moralischen Makel behaftet – sie war die Mätresse von König Philip II., hat sich nun aber in dessen Sohn Carlos verliebt. Nachdem sie entdeckt hat, daß Carlos in seine Stiefmutter Elisabeth verliebt ist, hat die Eifersüchtige dem König Beweise für die Liebe seiner Gattin zu ihrem Stiefsohn hinterbracht, doch nun verzehrt sie sich vor Schuldgefühlen. In ihrer Bravourarie “O verhängnisvolle, abscheuliche Gabe” (Band [1]) verflucht sie ihre eigene Schönheit, zeigt sodann Reue über das Elisabeth gegenüber begangene Unrecht und beschließt in einem letzten Gefühlsausbruch, Carlos aus dem Gefängnis zu retten – was sie in der anschließenden Aufstandsszene in die Tat umsetzt. Doch die Inquisition hat in diesem

fast beispiellos düsteren Szenario Verdis das letzte Wort.

Händel nannte seine Oper **Semele** (London 1744) “Die Geschichte der Semele”, und das Werk trägt den offiziellen Untertitel “in der Art eines Oratoriums”. Doch tatsächlich handelt es sich hier – wie sein Kollege Charles Jennens zu Recht bemerkte – um eine “derbe Oper”, bei der es um wenig mehr als erotische Verwicklungen geht – kein Wunder, daß das Werk erst im 20. Jahrhundert auf die Bühne kam. Mit ihrem Libretto von William Congreve ist dies sicherlich die größte komödiantische Oper in englischer Sprache, komponiert mit herausragender Meisterschaft und schlaudem Esprit. Jupiter hat die flatterhafte und zugleich ehrgeizige Semele an ihrem Hochzeitstag entführt und in einem Lustschloß etabliert, wo sie von einem feurigen Drachen bewacht wird. Seine eifersüchtige Gattin Juno ist hiervon keineswegs erfreut. In “Fort, Iris, fort von hier” (Band [2]) befiehlt sie ihrer Vertrauten, sie auf ihrer ungestümen Reise zu Somnus zu begleiten, dem erstaunlich wollüstigen Gott des Schlafes. Juno plant, ihn mit Hilfe der Avancen einer willigen Nymphe zu bestechen, den Drachen in einen tiefen Schlummer zu versetzen, um so Zugang zu Semeles Schloß zu

gewinnen und ihren Sturz zu bewerkstelligen. Die Charakterisierung der wichtig-tuerischen und temperamentvollen Juno gehört zu Händels gelungensten Einfällen.

Donna Elvira ist nur eine der 2065 Frauen, die der Protagonist **Don Giovanni** (Prag 1787) verführt und anschließend verlassen hat, doch Mozarts Musik macht sie zu etwas ganz Besonderem. In der ersten (Prager) Fassung der Oper hätte man sie auch als komische Figur verstehen können – eine lächerliche, ziemlich hysterische Frau. Doch für die erste Aufführung in Wien ein Jahr später gab der Komponist Elvira eine zusätzliche Arie, die er eigens für die “goldene Kehle” der Mme Cavaliere geschrieben hatte, der Geliebten Salieris, die zuvor als erste Sängerin die Rolle der Constanze interpretiert hatte. “Mich verriet der Undankbare” (Band [3]) verändert ihren Charakter in wesentlichen Zügen und verleiht ihr eine ganz neue Dimension. Die Zärtlichkeit und das Mitgefühl, die in der Musik ihres einleitenden Rezitativs zu spüren sind, zeigen uns eine Frau von großer emotionaler Tiefe: Obwohl Don Giovanni sie entsetzlich schlecht behandelt hat, liebt sie ihn noch immer und wird ihn ewig lieben. Mozart kannte, verstand und liebte die Frauen.

Das Szenario von *Don Carlos* mag düster sein, doch das von Verdi und seinem Librettisten entworfene Bühnenbild für **Il trovatore** (Rom 1853) ist noch viel düsterer – es scheint für die menschliche Spezies keinerlei Hoffnung zu geben. Der aufrührende Amboßchor geht ohne Unterbrechung in die Szene über, wo Azucena sich wie in einer Trance an den Tag erinnert, als sie zuschauen mußte, wie ihre zu Unrecht der Hexerei bezichtigte Mutter bei lebendigem Leib verbrannt wurde (Band [4]). Auf ihre Arie folgt wenig mehr als beklommenes Schweigen – sicherlich hat man die Geschichte schon oft genug gehört –, gefolgt von einer Wiederholung des Chores. Diese barbarische Tat war nur der erste Schritt in einem sich überstürzenden Reigen von Gewalt und Rache, der in unwissentlichem Brudermord enden wird – Azucena sorgt dafür, daß ihr eigens zu diesem Zweck sorgfältig aufgezogenes Ziehkind von seinem eigenen Bruder ermordet wird. In der Tat eine hoffnungslose Situation...

Ponchiellis Oper **La Gioconda** (Mailand 1876) ist fast ebenso berühmt für ihren Einfluß wie für die Musik selbst. Die Handlung, die der Librettist Arrigo Boito (verständlicherweise unter einem anagrammatischen Pseudonym) von einem Schauspiel Victor Hugos



extrahierte und drastisch kürzte, grenzt an das Melodramatische und ist fast unzusammenhängend, doch da die führenden Rollen sowohl vokal als auch dramatisch überaus dankbar sind, konnte das Werk seinen Platz im Repertoire behaupten. Die Titelheldin ist eine einfache Balladensängerin, die den Tenor Enzo Grimaldi liebt, einen Genueser Adligen, der als Seemann verkleidet in Venedig lebt. Enzo hat eine romantische Beziehung zu Laura, die inzwischen die Frau eines mächtigen venezianischen Senators geworden ist, und die beiden haben sich zu einem Treffen auf seinem Schiff verabredet. Als er sich kurz entfernt, erscheint Gioconda an Bord und die beiden Frauen verfechten in einem feurigen Duett (Band 4) ihre Besitzansprüche an den Mann, den sie beide lieben. Diese zutiefst aufwühlende Musik zeigt, in welchem Maße Ponchielli sich von den etablierten Opernmodellen der Zeit entfernt hatte; sein Einfluß auf die aufkommende sehr blutrünstige Schule von Mascagni und Leoncavallo – ganz zu schweigen von dem auf seinen Schüler Puccini – ist deutlich zu hören.

© 2007 Rodney Milnes
Übersetzung: Stephanie Wollny

Jennifer Larmore wurde in Atlanta (Georgia) geboren und studierte zunächst am Westminster Choir College Princeton (New Jersey) und dann privat bei John Bullock und Regina Resnik. Sie ist berühmt für ihre Auftritte in den Koloraturrollen des Barock- und Belcanto-Repertoires. Nach ihrem Europadebüt in *La clemenza di Tito* 1986 war die Erfolgskarriere der jungen Sängerin nicht aufzuhalten. Ihre Glanzrolle ist Rosina (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), die sie an der Metropolitan Opera New York, der Staatsoper Berlin, in Bonn, Paris, San Francisco und Buenos Aires verkörpert hat.

Weitere Erfolgsrollen waren Giovanna Seymour (*Anna Bolena*) in Nizza, Mélisande (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) in Marseilles, Isolier (*Le Comte Ory*) an der Mailänder Scala, Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*) bei den Salzburger Festspielen, Romeo (*I Capuleti e i Montecchi*) in der Carnegie Hall New York, an der Opéra de Paris-Bastille und in Genf, *L'italiana in Algeri* an der Deutschen Oper Berlin, in Paris und in Wien, Ruggiero (*Alcina*) an der Chicago Lyric Opera, Sesto (*La clemenza di Tito*) am Gran Teatro del Liceu Barcelona, die Titelrolle von *Carmen* an der Washington Opera, *Giulio Cesare* an der Met und in Madrid, die Titelrolle von *Orfeo* in Madrid, Prinz Orlofsky

(*Die Fledermaus*) in Japan und an der Met, Hänsel (*Hänsel und Gretel*) an der Met und bei den BBC Proms, Giulietta (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) an der Royal Opera Covent Garden und die Titelrolle von *La Cenerentola* an der Met.

Solokonzerte und das sinfonische Repertoire sind im Laufe der Karriere Jennifer Larmores von großer Bedeutung gewesen, so etwa Mahlers *Das Lied von der Erde*, *Rückertlieder* und die dritte Sinfonie, Berliozs *Nuits d'été*, Rossinis *Stabat Mater* und Schönbergs *Gurrelieder*, unter der Leitung von Dirigenten wie Riccardo Muti, Leonard Bernstein, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Kurt Masur, Sir Charles Mackerras, Seiji Ozawa und Donald Runnicles. Bei der Schlussfeier der Olympischen Spiele von Atlanta sang sie 1996 die olympische Hymne, und 2002 wurde sie in Anerkennung ihrer Verdienste um die Musik zum *Chevalier de l'ordre des arts et des lettres* ernannt.

Mit bisher bereits über siebzig Live- und Studioprojekten ist Jennifer Larmore die meistaufgenommene Mezzosopranistin der Schallplattengeschichte. Besonders hervorzuheben sind dabei *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Orfeo*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Cenerentola* sowie für Opera

Rara *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, *Bianca e Falliero*, *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra*, *Francesca di Foix*, und *Adelaide di Borgogna*.

Das **Philharmonia Orchestra**, eines der großen Orchester der Welt, steht nun bereits im zehnten 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 dreizehn komplette Opern eingespielt und in der Reihe "Opera in English" für Chandos mit Unterstützung durch die Peter Moores Foundation *The Marriage of Figaro*, *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*-Tournée und in Mexiko mit dem UNAM Symphony Orchestra. Zu den Neuproduktionen, die er in letzter Zeit dirigiert hat, zählen *Fidelio* beim New Zealand Festival, *Lucia di Lammermoor* an der New Israeli Opera und *Don Giovanni* an der Staatsoper Hannover.

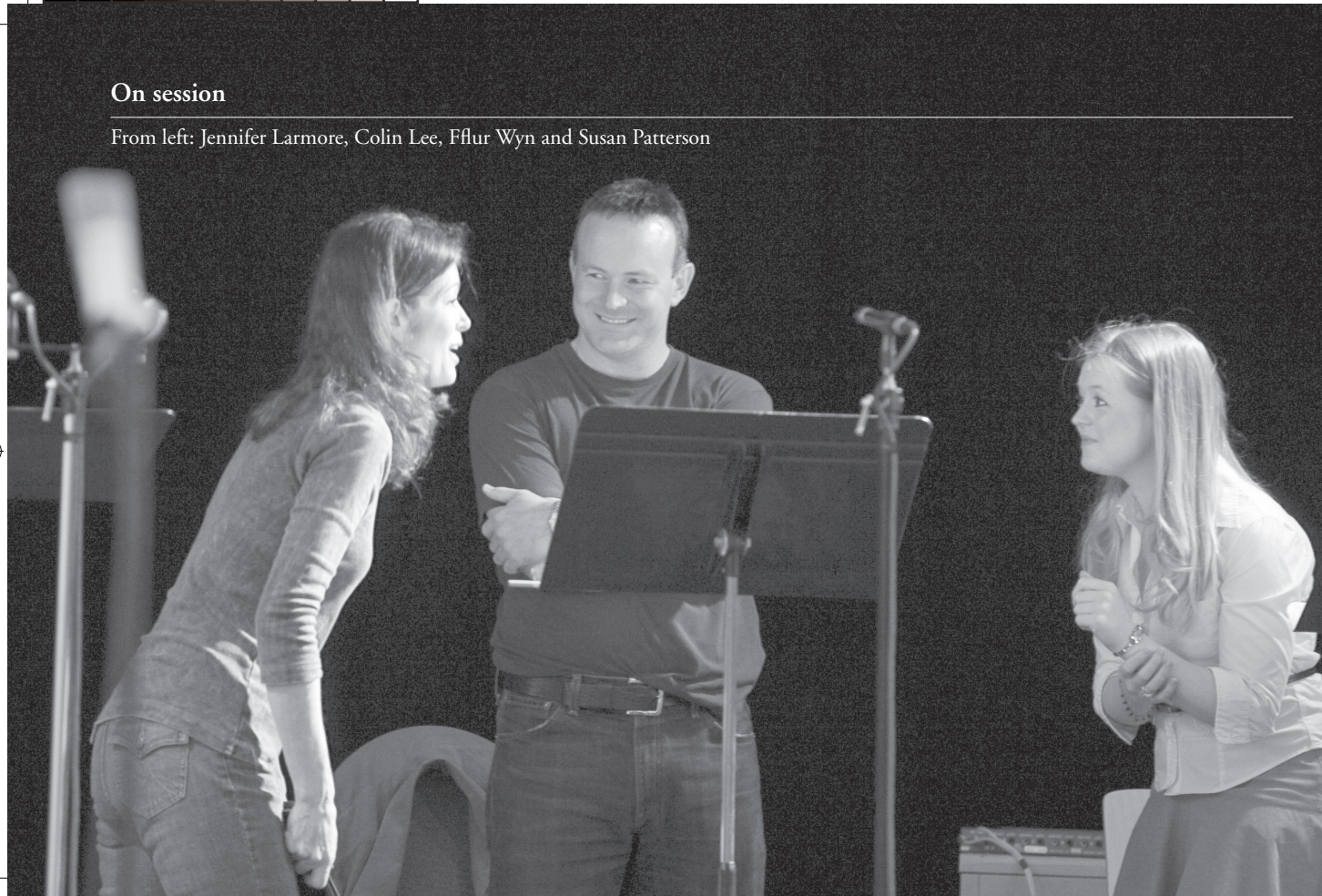
Seine Tätigkeit im Aufnahmestudio umfaßt die Produktion von Marschners *Der Vampyr* fürs BBC-Fernsehen und achtundzwanzig

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 *Nabucco*, *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.



On session

From left: Jennifer Larmore, Colin Lee, Fflur Wyn and Susan Patterson





Grands airs d'opéra

Jennifer Larmore est officiellement une “mezzo-soprano”, mais ce terme ne semble guère approprié pour décrire une artiste au talent aussi vaste et éclectique que celui dont elle fait preuve dans le présent récital – après tout, rares sont les mezzos à chanter la Valse de Juliette, extraite de l'opéra de Gounod. En vingt ans de carrière, Jennifer Larmore a exploré l'intégralité du répertoire lyrique, du baroque au contemporain, et s'avère l'une des chanteuses américaines les plus populaires et les plus admirées, accueillie avec enthousiasme dans les plus grands Opéras au monde.

Née à Atlanta, en Géorgie, elle fait ses études à Princeton et, significativement, avec Regina Resnik, autre cantatrice ayant franchi les frontières habituelles entre les répertoires de soprano, de mezzo et de contralto. Comme beaucoup de chanteurs américains naguère – ce n'est plus le cas, fort heureusement –, il lui faut mener une longue carrière couronnée de succès en Europe avant de devenir une star dans son propre pays. Elle fait ses débuts professionnels en 1986 à Nice, dans le rôle de Sesto de *La Clémence de Titus*, et passe trois ans avec cette compagnie, faisant la preuve de

son adaptabilité avec la Giovanna Seymour de Donizetti et l'Isolier de Rossini. Puis vient la Rosine du *Barbier*, qui sera dès lors un de ses rôles fétiches. Elle raconte qu'il lui arrive encore de le chanter dans cinq productions différentes au cours d'une même année, et qu'elle continuera de la sorte tant qu'on ne lui demandera pas d'arrêter – on peut toujours attendre. C'est dans ce rôle qu'elle fait ses débuts au Met en 1995, après avoir chanté le Roméo de Bellini en concert à New York l'année précédente, et remporté le prestigieux prix Richard Tucker. Depuis, elle se produit régulièrement au Met, dans le rôle titre de *Giulio Cesare* ou de *La Cenerentola*, en Isabella de *L'Italienne à Alger*, ou en Hansel de l'opéra de Humperdinck, et en 2005 en participant à la création de *An American Tragedy* (Une tragédie américaine) de Tobias Picker.

Son catalogue discographique est d'une variété stupéfiante, englobant aussi bien *Giulio Cesare* de Haendel que *Carmen*, l'*Orfeo* de Gluck que l'*Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra* de Rossini, et de nombreuses œuvres rares de Donizetti, de Pacini ou de Rossini. Musique des débuts du baroque, disque d'airs français

ou arias peu connues de Vivaldi, rien ne lui est étranger. On peut voir sa Rosine en DVD, dans la célèbre production de Dario Fo, qui fournit maint exemple de son sens de l'humour, intrinsèquement lié à sa personnalité artistique, et il va de soi que son physique de star de cinéma n'a pas nui à sa carrière. Elle anime sa propre émission de radio aux États-Unis et joue un rôle précieux comme ambassadrice de l'UNICEF, ayant hérité de la sollicitude de ses parents à l'égard des personnes défavorisées. Comment diable parvient-elle à tout faire?

Mais l'éclectisme est sans doute sa qualité première, comme le montre amplement ce qui suit.

La favorita est une œuvre tardive, écrite pour Paris en 1840, et donnée dans toute l'Europe et aux États-Unis en l'espace de cinq ans. Sa popularité persiste jusqu'à une date avancée du ^{xx}e siècle en France, tandis que l'Italie la programme toujours aujourd'hui, dans une version italienne (légèrement différente). L'action se déroule en Castille au ^{xiv}e siècle. Fernando, le héros chanté par un ténor, est un novice ayant renoncé à la vie monastique après s'être épris d'une inconnue. Nous entendons deux extraits de ce bel opéra, composé avec beaucoup de soin. Dans le

second (page 37), Fernando questionne Inez au sujet de l'identité de sa bien-aimée Leonora, mais la suivante demeure évasive. Leonora elle-même n'en dit pas plus lorsqu'ils se déclarent extatiquement leur amour. Son secret, auquel elle fait allusion dans un aparté tourmenté, est qu'elle est depuis longtemps la maîtresse du roi Alfonso XI. Lorsque les deux jeunes gens se séparent, Leonora remet à Fernando une commission d'officier, et au cours de l'opéra celui-ci conquiert les honneurs militaires; en récompense, le roi lui offre d'épouser celle qu'il voudra, et son choix se porte bien évidemment sur la mystérieuse Leonora. Le récital de Jennifer Larmore inclut l'air chanté par l'héroïne juste avant son mariage, où la jeune femme, rongée par la culpabilité, se demande comment Fernando réagira en apprenant son passé. La cavatine (page 38), lancée par la harpe et les cors, est l'une des mélodies les plus sophistiquées et les plus fluides de Donizetti, et la cabalette a toute la fougue nécessaire. L'opéra se termine mal: la cérémonie des vœux solennels de Fernando, retourné dans le giron de l'Église, est interrompue par Leonora qui, repentante et mortellement malade, est venue mourir entre ses bras.

Adriana Lecouvreur (Milan, 1902), de Francesco Cilea, est basée à la fois sur une



histoire vraie et sur un mélodrame quelque peu outrancier d'Eugène Scribe. Adrienne Lecouvreur est une célèbre actrice du XVIII^e siècle, et son amant du moment, le maréchal Maurice de Saxe, est lui aussi un personnage historique (on peut voir au château de Chambord la table en pierre de liais sur laquelle son corps a été embaumé). Dans le présent extrait (page [1]), la princesse de Bouillon, ancienne maîtresse de Maurice, l'attend fiévreusement car il lui a fixé un rendez-vous secret. L'a-t-il trahie? Bien sûr, mais la princesse a le dernier mot puisqu'elle envoie à Adrienne un bouquet de violettes empoisonnées dont la jeune actrice respire le parfum mortel.

Tancredi (Venise, 1813), basé sur une tragédie de Voltaire, est le premier grand *opera seria* de Rossini ; il remporte aussitôt un grand succès et ne sort ensuite plus guère du répertoire. La légende veut que tous les saute-ruisseaux vénitiens aient bientôt siffloté l'air de "Di tanti palpiti", et sa célébrité gagne bientôt toute l'Europe – Wagner le cite brièvement lors de la procession des guildes et des apprentis dans les *Maîtres chanteurs*. C'est aussi, à n'en point douter, un des hommages conscients de Rossini à Mozart: aussi bien l'accompagnement en pizzicatos que la soudaine modulation

rappellent le "Voi che sapete" de Cherubino. Le rôle titre est écrit pour contralto, et ici (page [2]) le héros, en exil loin de sa Sicile natale, rentre chez lui et attend avec impatience de retrouver Aménaida, la femme qu'il aime. Comme on pouvait s'y attendre, le cours de l'amour véritable est tout sauf paisible, et Rossini a composé deux fins, l'une heureuse, l'autre tragique. Il n'est pas deux rossiniens qui s'accordent pour désigner la plus appropriée.

Le grand opéra de jeunesse de Wagner, **Rienzi** (Dresde, 1842), demeura – et il en était quelque peu embarrassé – l'une de ses œuvres les plus populaires tout au long du XIX^e siècle; le compositeur laissa cependant bientôt derrière lui ce genre de formule grandiose à la Meyerbeer. Mais cette partition en cinq actes, inspirée d'un roman historique populaire de Bulwer-Lytton, contient nombre de très belles pages. Le "dernier tribun" de Rome, Rienzi, cherche en vain à réconcilier patriciens et plébéiens. Le jeune noble Adriano Colonna, rôle écrit pour mezzo-soprano, le soutient et est épris de sa sœur, Irene. Quand les patriciens conspirent contre Rienzi, Adriano est déchiré entre sa loyauté à l'égard du tribun et celle qu'il doit à sa famille, conflit puissamment exprimé dans une scène intensément dramatique, en deux parties, "Gerechter Gott" (page [3]),

clairement inspirée par l'admiration de Wagner pour *Fidelio*; le fait que la première interprète d'Adriano, Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient, ait aussi été l'artiste la plus admirée par Wagner dans le rôle de la Leonore de Beethoven, ne doit d'ailleurs rien au hasard.

Même compte tenu de la défiance du public britannique à l'égard de tout étranger osant s'attaquer à Shakespeare, la version musicale de **Roméo et Juliette** (Paris, 1867) proposée par Gounod n'est absolument pas indigne de sa source; de nombreux passages musicaux sont réellement inspirés. La Valse de Juliette (page [4]), au premier acte, exprime la joie de vivre de l'adolescente, peu avant qu'elle ne voit Roméo pour la première fois. La créatrice du rôle, Marie Miolan Carvalho, s'était fait une spécialité des valse chantées, et son statut d'épouse du directeur du Théâtre Lyrique donnait beaucoup de force à sa requête lorsqu'elle insistait pour qu'un nouvel opéra en contienne une. Celle-ci, à la différence d'autres (*Mireille*, *Faust*), ne nuit en rien à la composition dramatique.

Le chef-d'œuvre de Bellini, *Norma* (Milan, 1831), est sans doute l'emblème absolu de l'opéra *bel canto*, et "Mira o Norma" (page [5]), au centre de l'œuvre, est un exemple de toute beauté, abondamment

imité, du duo romantique pour sopranos. Au premier acte, la prêtresse druidique Norma découvre que son amant clandestin, père de ses deux enfants, le proconsul romain Pollione, l'a trahie avec une jeune prêtresse, Adalgisa, qu'il compte emmener avec lui à Rome. Au second acte, Norma, éperdue, songe à tuer ses enfants mais est incapable de passer à l'acte. Dans la première partie de son duo avec Adalgisa, elle ordonne à sa rivale d'emmener les enfants avec elle à Rome, et de les chérir. Mais Adalgisa, ignorant jusqu'alors la trahison de Pollione, refuse. Sa loyauté envers Norma passe en premier, et elle jure de convaincre le Romain de renouer avec son premier amour ("Vois, ô Norma"). La troisième partie du duo ("Désormais et à jamais") est un *allegro* enlevé, aux coloratures brillantes, mû par l'enthousiasme.

La princesse Eboli de **Don Carlos** (Paris, 1867) compte, à l'instar d'Amneris et d'Azucena, parmi les plus émouvants rôles verdiens pour mezzo-soprano. Moralement imparfaite, comme dans la pièce de Schiller dont l'opéra s'inspire étroitement, elle a été la maîtresse du roi Philippe II mais est désormais éprise du fils de ce dernier, Carlos. Lorsqu'elle découvre que ce dernier aime sa belle-mère, Élisabeth, la jalousie la pousse à faire parvenir



au roi la preuve de l'affection de sa femme pour son beau-fils, mais elle est à présent envahie par la culpabilité. Dans son air de bravoure, “Ô don fatal” ([page 14]), elle maudit sa propre beauté, manifeste du remords à la pensée d’avoir injustement accusé Élisabeth et, dans sa dernière envolée, jure de libérer Carlos de sa prison – ce qu’elle fait dans la scène suivante, lors de l’insurrection. Le scénario est cependant l’un des plus sombres de tous ceux mis en musique par Verdi, et c’est l’Inquisition qui a le dernier mot.

Haendel a intitulé sa **Sémélé** (Londres, 1744) “Histoire de Sémélé”, indiquant en sous-titre: “à la manière d’un oratorio”. Mais comme Charles Jennens, collègue du compositeur, le faisait observer à juste titre, c’est en fait “un opéra grivois”, où il n’est quasiment question que d’intrigues sexuelles – aussi n’est-il guère étonnant qu’il n’ait pas été mis en scène avant le ^{xx}e siècle. Avec son livret dû à Congreve, c’est sans doute la plus grande comédie opératique à mettre en musique un livret anglophone, composée avec un humour narquois et une sophistication poussés à l’extrême. Jupiter a enlevé la capricieuse et ambitieuse Sémélé le jour de ses noces et l’a installée dans un palais, véritable lieu de délices gardé par un dragon féroce. Ce qui n’est pas du goût de

la jalouse Junon, sa femme. Dans “Hence, Iris hence away” (page 15), elle ordonne à sa confidente de voler avec elle jusqu’à la demeure de Somnus, dieu du sommeil étonnamment lubrique. Junon envisage de le soudoyer, en lui promettant les faveurs d’une nymphe complaisante, afin qu’il plonge le dragon dans un profond sommeil, lui permettant ainsi d’accéder au palais de Sémélé et de provoquer sa perte. Le caractère pompeux et impétueux conféré par Haendel à Junon au travers de la musique est l’une des plus heureuses trouvailles du compositeur.

Donna Elvira est juste l’une des 2 065 femmes séduites et abandonnées par le protagoniste de **Don Giovanni** (Prague, 1787), mais la musique de Mozart fait d’elle quelqu’un de tout à fait à part. Dans la première version de l’opéra (celle de Prague), on pouvait éventuellement la concevoir comme un personnage comique de femme échevelée, proche de l’hystérie. Mais pour la création à Vienne, un an plus tard, le compositeur a doté Elvira d’un air supplémentaire, écrit pour “l’habile gosier” de M^{me} Cavalieri, maîtresse de Salieri, qui avait déjà créé le rôle de Constanze. “Cet ingrat m’a trahie” (page 16) modifie significativement le personnage, lui ajoutant une dimension totalement nouvelle.

La tendresse, la compassion apportée par la musique à son récitatif introductif nous révèlent une femme animée par des sentiments profonds: en dépit de la façon ignoble dont Giovanni l’a traitée, elle l’aime et l’aimera toujours. Mozart connaissait bien les femmes, les aimait et les comprenait.

Si le scénario de *Don Carlos* peut être considéré comme sombre, celui conçu par Verdi et son librettiste pour **Le Trouvère** (Rome, 1853) l’est encore plus – la race humaine semble privée de tout espoir. Après le stimulant Chœur des enclumes, et sans solution de continuité, la gitane Azucena, comme en transe, évoque le jour où elle a vu sa mère brûlée vive, après avoir été accusée à tort de sorcellerie (page 17). Son chant n’est guère accueilli que par un silence embarrassé – l’auditoire a sûrement déjà entendu son histoire – et par une reprise du chœur. Cet acte de barbarie a été la première étape d’une succession vertigineuse de violences et de revanches qui culmine en un fratricide inconscient: Azucena fait en sorte que son enfant adoptif – qu’elle a élevé avec ce dénouement en vue – soit assassiné par son véritable frère. Aucun espoir, vous disait-on...

La Gioconda de Ponchielli (Milan, 1876) doit son importance autant à son influence qu’à la musique elle-même. L’intrigue,

radicalement condensée (sous un pseudonyme anagrammatique, ce qui se comprend) par le librettiste Arrigo Boito à partir d’une pièce de Victor Hugo, frise le mélodrame et l’incohérence, mais les rôles principaux sont suffisamment gratifiants, aussi bien vocalement que dramatiquement, pour maintenir l’œuvre au répertoire. L’héroïne éponyme de l’opéra est une simple chanteuse des rues éprise du ténor Enzo Grimaldi, noble génois vivant à Venise où il se fait passer pour un marin. Enzo a autrefois entretenu une relation amoureuse avec Laura, devenue depuis la femme d’un puissant sénateur vénitien, et les deux anciens amants ont convenu de se retrouver sur le navire d’Enzo. Alors qu’il s’est absenté, Gioconda arrive à bord et, au cours d’un duo féroce (page 18), les deux femmes s’affrontent comme des furies pour l’homme qu’elles aiment. Cette musique viscéralement stimulante montre à quel point Ponchielli rompt avec les modèles lyriques établis de son époque, et son influence sur l’école naissante du verisme “sang et tripes” à la Mascagni ou à la Leoncavallo – pour ne rien dire de celle exercée sur son élève Puccini – est clairement perceptible.

© 2007 Rodney Milnes
Traduction: Josée Bégaud



Née à Atlanta, **Jennifer Larmore** a étudié au Westminster Choir College de Princeton dans le New Jersey puis en privé avec John Bullock et Regina Resnik. Elle est célèbre pour ses interprétations des rôles coloratures du répertoire baroque et *bel canto*. Après ses débuts en Europe dans *La clemenza di Tito* en 1986, elle s'est rapidement imposée comme une nouvelle star du monde lyrique. Elle a été particulièrement associée au rôle de Rosina (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) qu'elle a chanté au Metropolitan Opera de New York, au Staatsoper de Berlin, à Bonn, Paris, San Francisco et Buenos Aires.

Parmi les autres rôles de son répertoire figurent Giovanna Seymour (*Anna Bolena*) à Nice; Mélisande (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) à Marseilles; Isolier (*Le Comte Ory*) à La Scala de Milan; Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*) au Festival de Salzbourg; Romeo (*I Capuleti e i Montecchi*) au Carnegie Hall de New York, à l'Opéra de Paris-Bastille et à Genève; *L'italiana in Algeri* au Deutsche Oper de Berlin, à Paris et Vienne; Ruggiero (*Alcina*) au Chicago Lyric Opera; Sesto (*La clemenza di Tito*) au Gran Teatro del Liceu de Barcelone; le rôle titre dans *Carmen* à l'Opéra de Washington; *Giulio Cesare* au Metropolitan Opera et à Madrid; le rôle titre dans *Orfeo* à Madrid; Orlovsky

(*Die Fledermaus*) au Japon et au Metropolitan Opera, Hansel (*Hänsel und Gretel*) au Metropolitan Opera et aux BBC Proms de Londres; Giulietta (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) au Royal Opera de Covent Garden, et le rôle titre dans *La Cenerentola* au Metropolitan Opera.

Jennifer Larmore connaît également une importante carrière en récital et en concert. Elle a interprété entre autres *Das Lied von der Erde*, les *Rückertlieder* et la Troisième Symphonie de Mahler, les *Nuits d'été* de Berlioz, le *Stabat Mater* de Rossini et les *Gurrelieder* de Schoenberg, sous la direction de chefs tels que Riccardo Muti, Leonard Bernstein, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Kurt Masur, Sir Charles Mackerras, Seiji Ozawa et Donald Runnicles. Elle fut également choisie pour chanter l'hymne olympique lors de la clôture des Jeux Olympiques d'Atlanta en 1996. En 2002, elle est devenue *Chevalier de l'ordre des arts et des lettres* en reconnaissance de sa contribution au monde de la musique.

Jennifer Larmore a réalisé plus de soixante-dix enregistrements jusqu'à présent, un fait qui lui a valu la distinction d'être la mezzo-soprano la plus enregistrée de tous les temps. Ces enregistrements incluent *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Julius Caesar*, *Orfeo*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Cenerentola* et pour Opera

Rara, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, *Bianca e Falliero*, *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra*, *Francesca di Foix* et *Adelaide di Borgogna*.

Reconnu comme l'un des plus grands orchestres du monde, le **Philharmonia Orchestra** a depuis dix 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 unanimement 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 treize intégrales d'opéras et, pour Opera in English chez Chandos, série financée par la Peter Moores Foundation *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Thieving Magpie*, *Wozzeck*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Elixir of Love*, *Lucia of Lammermoor*, *Faust*, *Carmen*, *Aida*, *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.

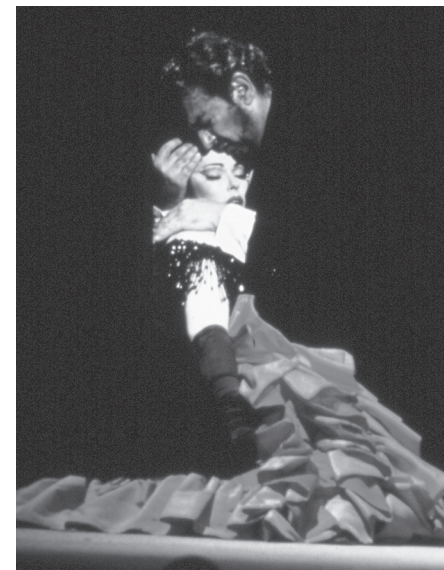
Sa carrière, nationale et internationale, est extrêmement remplie, aussi bien sur la scène lyrique qu'en concert. Il a dirigé plusieurs productions de l'English National Opera et de l'Opera North et collabore régulièrement avec le Philharmonia Orchestra et le London Philharmonic Orchestra. C'est avec *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 *Nabucco*, *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*, l'enregistrement primé de *Tosca* et des extraits de *Der Rosenkavalier*, tous ces enregistrements étant réalisés en collaboration avec la Peter Moores Foundation.



© Ken Howard

Jennifer Larmore as Carmen and Plácido Domingo as Don José in the Los Angeles Opera production of Bizet's *Carmen*



Grandi arie operistiche

Jennifer Larmore è definita un “mezzosoprano”, ma il termine sembra appena adeguato per descrivere la portata e la versatilità da lei dimostrata in questo disco di recital. In fin dei conti, non è un qualsiasi mezzo a cantare il Valzer di Giulietta dall’opera di Gounod. In venti anni di carriera Larmore ha spaziato in tutto il repertorio operistico, dal Barocco al contemporaneo, rivelandosi uno degli artisti americani più amati e rispettati, oltre a essere richiesta da tutti i più grandi teatri di lirica del mondo.

Nata ad Atlanta, in Georgia, Larmore ha studiato a Princeton e, soprattutto, con Regina Resnik, un’altra cantante che è riuscita a superare i limiti normalmente imposti tra soprano, mezzo e contralto. Come molti cantanti americani di un tempo (oggi fortunatamente non è più così), prima di diventare una star nel suo paese ha avuto una carriera di successo in Europa. Dopo il debutto professionale avvenuto a Nizza, nel 1986, con la parte di Sesto in *La clemenza di Tito*, rimase con la compagnia per tre anni, dimostrando la sua versatilità anche con la Giovanna Seymour di Donizetti e Isolier di Rossini. Poi arrivò

Rosina nel *Barbiere*, diventato uno dei suoi ruoli a lei più congeniali. Lo canta in almeno cinque diverse produzioni l’anno e dice che continuerà a farlo fino a quando il pubblico non smetterà di chiederglielo. Cosa certo improbabile. Questo fu inoltre il ruolo con cui debuttò al Met nel 1995, dopo il Romeo di Bellini che aveva eseguito in concerto a New York l’anno precedente e con cui ha vinto il prestigioso Richard Tucker Award. Da allora si è esibita al Met regolarmente, nei ruoli di protagonista di *Giulio Cesare* e *La Cenerentola*, nella parte di Isabella in *L’italiana in Algeri*, nel ruolo di Hansel di Humperdinck e, nel 2005, prendendo parte alla prima di *An American Tragedy* di Tobias Picker.

L’elenco delle sue incisioni è incredibilmente vario, spaziando da *Giulio Cesare* di Handel a *Carmen*, da *Orfeo* di Gluck a *Elisabetta, regina d’Inghilterra* di Rossini, oltre a rari Donizetti, Pacini e Rossini. Musica del primo Barocco, un disco di arie francesi, un Vivaldi inedito... Jennifer Larmore li ha cantati davvero tutti. E la sua Rosina può essere ammirata su DVD nella famosa produzione di Dario Fo, in cui viene messo in evidenza un umorismo che

costituisce gran parte del suo carattere di artista, oltre naturalmente al suo aspetto da star cinematografica che non ha certo nociuto alla sua carriera. Larmore ha un suo programma radiofonico negli USA ed è un apprezzato ambasciatore per l’UNICEF, avendo ereditato dai suoi genitori l’interesse per la condizione dei più poveri. Come fa a trovare il tempo per fare tutto questo?

La sua virtù predominante, tuttavia, è forse la versatilità, come dimostra chiaramente ciò che segue.

La favorita è un’opera tarda, composta per Parigi nel 1840 ed eseguita nei cinque anni seguenti in tutta Europa e negli Stati Uniti. Continuò a essere popolare in Francia fino al ventesimo secolo e oggi sopravvive nella sua versione italiana (leggermente alterata). La scena è la Castiglia del quattordicesimo secolo. Fernando, il tenore, è un frate novizio che ha rinunciato ai suoi voti, essendosi innamorato di una donna sconosciuta. Sono due gli estratti da quest’opera molto bella e composta con maestria. Nel secondo (track [7]) Fernando chiede all’elusiva Inez l’identità della sua amata Leonora. Quest’ultima non si rivela molto più espansiva quando i due dichiarano il loro amore reciproco. Il suo segreto, appena accennato con una certa agonia, è che la

giovane è da tempo amante di Re Alfonso XI. Al momento della loro separazione, la giovane offre una provvigione militare a Fernando che, nel corso dell’opera, si assicura la gloria militare ed è premiato dal re con la possibilità di scegliere qualunque moglie desideri. Lui, ovviamente, sceglie la misteriosa Leonora. Il recital di Larmore include l’aria, cantata con un profondo senso di colpa da Leonora poco prima del matrimonio: quale sarà la reazione di Fernando quando scoprirà il suo passato? La cavatina (track [2]), avviata da arpa e fiati, è una delle più complete e delicate melodie di Donizetti, e la cabaletta che ne fa seguito è altrettanto eccezionale. L’opera non ha un lieto fine: la cerimonia di Fernando che, ritornato alla chiesa, sta prendendo i voti, è interrotta da una Leonora in fin di vita che, pentendosi, muore tra le sue braccia.

Adriana Lecouvreur di Francesco Cilea (Milano, 1902) è ispirata a fatti realmente avvenuti, oltre che a un melodramma alquanto passionale di Eugène Scribe. Lecouvreur fu un’attrice famosa del diciottesimo secolo e il suo amante del tempo, Maurizio, conte di Sassonia, fu anche lui una figura storica (la lastra di marmo su cui il suo corpo fu imbalsamato può essere vista nello Château de Chambord). Tuttavia, Maurizio ha un’amante



respinta, la Principessa de Bouillon, e in questo estratto (track 17) la giovane attende con fervore il suo arrivo a un appuntamento segreto. L'ha tradita? Certo, ma la Principessa ha l'ultima parola, inviando ad Adriana un mazzo di violette cosparse di veleno, che lei inalava con conseguenze mortali.

Tancredi (Venezia, 1813), ispirata a una tragedia di Voltaire, fu la prima grande *opera seria* di Rossini, un successo istantaneo e da allora raramente fuori repertorio. Vuole la leggenda che ogni giovane vagabondo di Venezia finì col fischiettare subito la melodia di “Di tanti palpiti” e la sua fama si diffuse presto attraverso l'Europa. Persino Wagner la citò brevemente nella processione di apprendisti e associazioni nel *Die Meistersinger*. Fu anche, sicuramente, uno degli *hommages* coscienti di Rossini a Mozart: sia nell'accompagnamento pizzicato che nell'improvvisa eco di modulazione nel “Voi che sapete” di Cherubino. Il ruolo di protagonista fu composto per un contralto e qui (track 9) l'eroe, esiliato dalla sua natia Sicilia, ritorna a casa e attende con eccitazione di riunirsi ad Amenaide, la donna che ama. Prevedibilmente, non tutto procede liscio sulla strada del vero amore e Rossini compose sia un lieto fine che uno tragico. I rossiniani ancora

non trovano un accordo su quale sia il più appropriato.

Rienzi (Dresda, 1842), tra le prime Grandi Opere di Wagner, rimase, con imbarazzo del compositore, uno dei suoi lavori più popolari in tutto il diciannovesimo secolo, basato su una formula meyerbeeriana molto pretenziosa che lo stesso Wagner superò presto. Ma la partitura in cinque atti, ispirata al popolare romanzo storico di Bulwer-Lytton, include musica di grande bellezza. L'“ultimo tribuno” di Roma, Rienzi, cerca senza successo di riconciliare patrizi e plebei. Il giovane nobile Adriano Colonna – parte composta per un mezzosoprano – lo appoggia ed è innamorato della sorella di lui, Irene. Quando i patrizi cospirano contro Rienzi, Adriano è combattuto tra un senso di lealtà nei confronti dell'amico e quello nei confronti della sua famiglia, un conflitto espresso potentemente nella sua scena in due parti, “Gerechter Gott” (plage 10), intensamente drammatica e chiaramente ispirata dall'ammirazione di Wagner per *Fidelio*. Non è infatti una coincidenza che la prima cantante a esibirsi nella parte di Adriano, Wilhelmine Schroder-Devrient, fu l'artista che Wagner ammirò soprattutto nella parte di Leonore di Beethoven.

Anche tenendo conto della diffidenza del pubblico britannico nei confronti degli stranieri che osano mettere mano su Shakespeare, l'ambientazione di Gounod per **Romeo e Giulietta** (Parigi, 1867) non è affatto indegna della sua fonte e contiene numerosi passaggi musicali di grande ispirazione. Il Valzer di Giulietta (plage 12), dal primo atto, esprime la *joie de vivre* adolescenziale che la contraddistingue prima di incontrare Romeo. La creatrice del ruolo, Marie Miolan Carvalho, rese i Valzer una vera specialità e, considerato che era sposata al direttore del Théâtre Lyrique, si trovava nella posizione ideale per insistere sulla loro inclusione nelle nuove opere. Questo, al contrario di alcune altre (*Mireille*, *Faust*), non apporta alcun danno alla cornice drammatica.

Norma (Milano, 1831), capolavoro di Bellini, è forse la più alta icona operistica del *bel canto* e al suo centro troviamo “Mira, o Norma” (plage 10), un eccellente esempio, più volte imitato, del romantico duetto per due soprani. Nel primo atto la sacerdotessa druida Norma ha scoperto che il suo amante segreto e il padre dei suoi due figli, il proconsole romano Pollione, l'ha tradita con un'altra sacerdotessa, Adalgisa, che vuole portare con sé a Roma. Nel secondo atto, una Norma affranta valuta

la possibilità di uccidere i suoi bambini, ma è incapace di farlo. Nella prima parte del suo duetto con Adalgisa, la giovane ordina alla sua rivale di portare i suoi figli con sé a Roma e di amarli come suoi. Ma Adalgisa, che fino a questo momento non sa nulla del tradimento di Pollione, si rifiuta di farlo. Il senso di lealtà nei confronti di Norma ha la precedenza e la donna giura di convincere il Romano a tornare al suo primo amore (“Mira, o Norma”). La terza parte del duetto (“Sì, fino all'ore estreme”) è un *allegro* vivace con una coloratura brillante e ispirato da un grande ottimismo.

La Principessa Eboli nel **Don Carlos** (Parigi, 1867) è, assieme ad Amneris e Azucena, uno dei più potenti ruoli di Verdi per mezzosoprano. Moralmente imperfetta, proprio come nel dramma di Schiller a cui l'opera si ispira, la giovane è stata l'amante di Re Filippo II ma ha ora un'infatuazione per il figlio di lui, Carlos. Avendo scoperto che Carlos è innamorato della matrigna Elisabetta, in un gesto di gelosia la Principessa porta al Re la prova dell'affetto della moglie per il suo figliastro, ma ora è tormentata da un profondo senso di colpa. Nell'aria virtuosa “O don fatale, o don crudele” (track 11) maledice la propria bellezza, rivela il proprio rimorso per aver agito male nei confronti di Elisabetta, e



nello sfogo finale si propone di salvare Carlos dalla prigione, compito che porta a termine nella seguente scena dell'insurrezione. Ma, in uno degli scenari più squallidi di Verdi, è l'Inquisizione ad avere l'ultima parola.

Handel definì la sua **Semele** (Londra, 1744) “Storia di Semele”, ufficialmente denominata “secondo i modi di un oratorio”. Ma come notato da Charles Jennens, collega del compositore, si tratta in effetti di “un’opera oscena”, che si incentra su comportamenti a sfondo sessuale e poco altro. Nessuna meraviglia, quindi, se non fu allestita fino al Ventesimo secolo. Accompagnata da un libretto di Congreve, questa deve essere la più grande commedia operistica in lingua inglese, composta con la massima eleganza e con intelligente arguzia. Giove ha rapito l’ambiziosa, volubile Semele nel giorno del suo matrimonio e l’ha portata in un palazzo di piacere, presidiato da un drago feroce. Giunone, la moglie gelosa, non è contenta. In “Da qui, Iride, via da qui” (track [8]) la donna ordina alla sua confidente di unirsi a lei in un volo precipitoso per far visita a Sonno, un dio sorprendentemente libidinoso. Giunone intende corromperlo con le attenzioni di una ninfa compiacente al fine di far cadere il drago in un sonno profondo, guadagnare accesso al

palazzo di Semele e godere della sua caduta. La caratterizzazione superba e impetuosa di Giunone attraverso la sua musica è una delle trovate più felici di Handel.

Donna Elvira è solo una delle 2.065 donne sedotte e abbandonate dal protagonista del **Don Giovanni** (Praga, 1787), ma la musica di Mozart la distingue come una persona piuttosto speciale. Nella prima versione dell’opera (a Praga), la giovane poteva essere interpretata plausibilmente da un personaggio comico – una donna sciocca e piuttosto isterica. Ma per la prima performance a Vienna, un anno dopo, il compositore affidò a Elvira un’altra aria, composta per la “gola dorata” di Mme Cavalieri, amante di Salieri, che in precedenza aveva creato il ruolo di Constanze. “Mi tradi quell’alma ingrata” (track [5]) modifica il personaggio in maniera significativa, aggiungendo a esso una dimensione completamente nuova. La tenerezza, la compassione che la musica porta al suo recitativo d’introduzione ci mostra una donna dai sentimenti profondi: nonostante l’osceno trattamento di Giovanni, lo ama ancora e lo amerà per sempre. Mozart conosceva, capiva ed amava le donne.

Lo scenario del *Don Carlos* può essere squallido, ma quello ideato da Verdi e dal

suo librettista per **Il trovatore** (Rome, 1853) lo è ancora di più, allontanando quasi ogni speranza per la razza umana. Dopo il travolgente coro “Vedi! Le fosche notturne spoglie”, e senza una pausa, la zingara Azucena ricorda come in trance il giorno in cui assistette alla morte della madre, accusata erroneamente di stregoneria e arsa viva sul fuoco (track [2]). Il suo canto è accolto da poco più di un imbarazzato silenzio – lo hanno sicuramente già ascoltato prima – e da una ripresa del coro. Quell’atto barbarico era stato il primo passo in un ciclo precipitoso di violenza e di vendetta, destinato a culminare in un fratricidio involontario: Azucena progetta l’assassinio, da parte del vero fratello, del figlio adottivo da lei allevato con cura proprio in previsione di un tale atto. Davvero, non c’è speranza...

La Gioconda di Ponchielli (Milano, 1876) è importante per la sua influenza quasi quanto per la sua musica *di per sé*. La trama, ridotta drasticamente dal librettista Arrigo Boito (comprensibilmente sotto uno pseudonimo anagrammatico) da un dramma di Victor Hugo, tende al melodramma e al limite dell’incoerenza ma, il fatto che i suoi ruoli principali siano enormemente soddisfacenti sia da un punto di vista vocale che da quello drammatico, ha assicurato all’opera il suo

posto in repertorio. L’eroina del titolo è una semplice cantante di ballate che ama il tenore Enzo Grimaldi, un nobile genovese che vive a Venezia travestito da marinaio. Enzo ha avuto una relazione sentimentale con Laura, ora moglie di un potente senatore veneziano, e viene inviato in missione sulla sua nave. Nel corso della sua assenza temporanea, Gioconda arriva a bordo e in un duetto spietato (page [4]) le due donne si battono per il possesso dell’uomo amate da entrambe. Questa musica eccitante in maniera quasi viscerale dimostra fino a che punto Ponchielli si era distaccato dai modelli operistici approvati del tempo. E in essa appare molto chiara l’influenza del compositore sulla scuola emergente e sanguinolenta di Mascagni e Leoncavallo – senza dimenticare il suo pupillo Puccini.

© 2007 Rodney Milnes

Traduzione: Emily Stefania

Originaria di Atlanta, **Jennifer Larmore** ha studiato presso il Westminster Choir College di Princeton, New Jersey e poi privatamente con John Bullock e Regina Resnik. È famosa per le sue interpretazioni dei ruoli di coloratura del repertorio barocco e belcantistico. Dopo il debutto europeo ne *La clemenza di Tito*



nel 1986, si è subito affermata tra le star emergenti. Il suo nome è associato soprattutto con il ruolo di Rosina (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), interpretato alla Metropolitan Opera, alla Staatsoper di Berlino, a Bonn, Parigi, San Francisco e Buenos Aires.

Altri ruoli comprendono Giovanna Seymour (*Anna Bolena*) a Nizza; Mélisande (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) a Marsiglia; Isolier (*Le Comte Ory*) alla Scala di Milano; Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*) al Festival di Salisburgo; Romeo (*I Capuleti e i Montecchi*) al Carnegie Hall di New York, all'Opéra de Paris-Bastille e a Ginevra; *L'Italiana in Algeri* alla Deutsche Oper di Berlino, oltre che a Parigi e Vienna; Ruggiero (*Alcina*) con la Chicago Lyric Opera; Sesto (*La clemenza di Tito*) al Gran Teatro del Liceu di Barcellona; il ruolo di protagonista in *Carmen* con la Washington Opera; *Giulio Cesare* alla Metropolitan Opera e a Madrid; il ruolo di protagonista nell'*Orfeo* a Madrid; Orlovsky (*Die Fledermaus*) in Giappone e al Met, Hänsel (*Hänsel und Gretel*) alla Metropolitan Opera e in concerto ai Prom BBC; Giulietta (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) alla Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, e il ruolo di protagonista ne *La Cenerentola* alla Metropolitan Opera.

I recital e il repertorio sinfonico hanno un posto importante nella sua carriera: il

suo repertorio, che comprende *Das Lied von der Erde*, *Rückertlieder* e la terza Sinfonia di Mahler, *Nuits d'été* di Berlioz, *Stabat Mater* di Rossini e *Gurrelieder* di Schoenberg, l'ha vista collaborare con direttori del calibro di Riccardo Muti, Leonard Bernstein, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Kurt Masur, sir Charles Mackerras, Seiji Ozawa e Donald Runnicles. Jennifer Larmore è stata scelta per concludere i Giochi Olimpici di Atlanta nel 1996 interpretando l'Inno olimpico; nel 2002 è stata insignita del titolo di *Chevalier de l'ordre des arts et des lettres* per il suo contributo al mondo della musica.

Con oltre settanta titoli al suo attivo, Jennifer Larmore è il mezzosoprano più registrato di tutti i tempi. La discografia comprende *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Orfeo*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Cenerentola* e, per Opera Rara, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, *Bianca e Falliero*, *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra*, *Francesca di Foix*, e *Adelaide di Borgogna*.

La **Philharmonia Orchestra**, una delle più grandi orchestre del mondo, è diretta per la decima 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 tredici opere complete, e nella serie Opera in English per Chandos, sponsorizzata dalla Peter Moores Foundation, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Thieving Magpie*, *Wozzeck*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Elixir of Love*, *Lucia di 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 tournées 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 vinto 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), *Nabucco*, *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.



© Clive Barba / Arena Pal

Jennifer Larmore as Rosina in The Royal Opera's production of Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*



from Adriana Lecouvreur

Princess of Bouillon's aria

Princess of Bouillon

- [1] The torment of desire, exquisite torture,
the burning throes of passion,
treacherous impatience, fever, shivers;
what horror and what rapture
consume a loving heart in the hell of waiting!
Each sound, each shadow in the sultry darkness
gives hope that the eager waiting is ended.
When suspicion fights with longing,
somehow, each heartbeat lasts for a lifetime,
eternally suspended...

Will he come? Am I forgotten?
What keeps him? Does he not love me?
There, now! He is coming!
No, the soft river's murmur mingles with the sigh
of willow trees in slumber...

Star of the Evening, cease your endless journey!
Stay one more hour, just one more hour;
hold back the night one glorious moment!
If he has not betrayed me, lead him to my love!
*Arturo Colautti after Scribe and Legouvé's play
Adrienne Lecouvreur, English translation by
Christopher Cowell*

from La favorita

Leonora's aria

Leonora

- [2] Can I believe it?
Oh God... He... Fernando...
To marry... Leonora! Ah!
It must be true, but I am full of doubt still;
this sudden joy makes me tremble...
Fernando... my husband? How can I be so
shameless?
I bring a dowry of dishonour to his name...
No, never! Though he will surely hate me I must
flee:
soon he will know what sort of woman he adores
so blindly.

Oh my beloved, my poor heart would surrender
all earthy treasures to keep you in my care;
but soon the love I give you, so pure and tender,
shall be poisoned by terror and despair.
The truth will strike you, and as I watch you
alter,
I shall discover my own pain and dread.
Then if your righteous anger, but once should
falter,
Oh God in heaven, vent all your fury on my
head.

Come you monsters, what can delay you?
For in heaven my fate is known.

I submit to heav'nly powers!
Come, the wedding feast is waiting!
See the altar decked with flowers
and the tomb below me gaping!
Veiled in black, I hide my face
from the shame and degradation;
I shall never know redemption.
God will never grant me rest,
I am evil, I am worthless,
God will never grant me rest.

*Alphonse Royer and Gustave Vaëz, English
translation by David Parry*

from Il trovatore

Azucena's canzone

Azucena

- [3] Fierce flames are raging, loud clamour fills the air,
Mad crowds rush forward, eager for vengeance.
Shouts of derision echo from ev'ry side:
On comes the gipsy, guarded by soldiers.
Faces are staring, red in the fiery glow
cast by the flames rising to heaven, to heav'n
above!
Fierce flames are raging, there stands the sacrifice,
clad in her black robe, bare-foot and haggard.
Wildly they clamour, 'Death to the Zingara'.
Echo repeats the cry, far down the valley faces
are staring,
red in the the fiery glow

cast by the flames rising to heaven, to heav'n
above!

*Salvatore Cammarano after Gutiérrez, English
translation by Tom Hammond, reprinted
by permission of English National
Opera Benevolent Fund*

from La Gioconda

Gioconda and Laura's duet

Gioconda

- [4] My curse upon you!

Laura
Who are you?

Gioconda

This much I'll tell you;
I'm a shadow in the silence!
You may call me the hand of Vengeance!
He is mine, although you love him!

Laura
God!

Gioconda

There I watched my helpless quarry like a beast
consumed by hunger,
and a super-human anger fired my blood with
deadly fury!



Are you frightened? Does love devour you?
Lucky rival, run from disaster!
Yes, the rudder and the mast are set for sail.
Go on! Go on! Go! I dare you!

Laura
Brutal monster!

Gioconda
See how you cower, yet you think your love can
conquer such a hero?

Laura
My heart is stronger far than yours!

Gioconda
Blasphemer!

Laura
Liar!
Love like mine is the light of creation
and the air that gives breath to my body;
like the power of divine inspiration,
power that moved me to the first sighs of love!

Gioconda
And I love him as much as the lion
loves the slaughter,
or the tempest, the thunder;
as the lightning, the mountains, the iron
loves the furnace heat, the eagle, the sun!
Like the lightning, the mountains... I'll defy you
and fight for my love!

Laura
For the touch of his kisses I am ready to die here,
to die for my love!
Love like mine is the light of creation
and the air that gives breath to my body;
for the touch of his kisses I'm ready
to defy you and to die for my love. Ah!

Gioconda
For the touch of his kisses
I'll defy you and I'll fight for my lover, Ah!
*Arrigo Boito after Hugo, English translation by
Christopher Cowell*

from Don Giovanni

Donna Elvira's recitative and aria

Donna Elvira
[5] To what atrocity, o heaven, to what appalling
depths of depravity that villain has descended!
Ah no! No longer can he escape the anger and
the justice of heaven.
I feel around me the arrows of vengeance that
will rain down upon him!
There yawns before him the mouth of the abyss.
Wretched Elvira, in what sorry confusion do you
still languish!
And why this endless sighing and why such
anguish?

Aria
That ungrateful man betrayed me, he cruelly
betrayed me,
so unhappy, oh God, how I sigh, so unhappy,
oh heaven, and left to sigh!
He deceived me, I am abandoned with a love
that will not die.
When I think of what I suffered, in my heart
I cry for vengeance,
but it trembles when he's in danger and I know
the reason why.

*Lorenzo da Ponte, English translation
by Amanda Holden*

from Rienzi

Adriano's scena

Adriano
[6] Oh righteous God, my fate is in your hands!
The people shout for war, a dream no more!
Oh, Earth receive my shame and my distress!
Where is the man who suffers more than I?
Who made me victim of the powers of hell?
Rienzi, man of sorrow, what a fate to bring to
me, your most unhappy friend.
Where then shall I direct my footsteps?
Where shall my sword be raised to strike?
Must I now kill Irene's brother?
Or pierce my noble father's heart!

Still in full bloom my life is fading,
farewell, farewell to chivalry and pride.
All hope of glory now is ending,
misfortune ever, yes, ever by my side.
My star is shrouded deep in gloom
before its beam has pierced the night;
And faintly through the veil of doom
pure love would shed its gentle light.
My star in deepest gloom is shrouded, before it
pierced the night
And faintly through the veil of doom
the kindly radiance of love would shed its gentle
light!
Still in full bloom my life is fading, farewell,
farewell to chivalry and pride.
All hope of glory now is ending, misfortune ever,
yes, ever by my side.

Where was I? Ah, where am I now?
The signal... God, am I too late?
Once course is open!
Only one.
To find my father I must fly;
Persuade him we could be united.
I'll make him listen.
If I cannot change him death alone is left!
If he'll relent and offer peace, Rienzi will forgive
again.
Have mercy Lord.
I pray to Thee who sends us blessing from above.
Oh, may Thy Spirit strengthen me and turn their
hearts from hate to love.



*Wagner after Edward Bulwer-Lytton's novel of the same name, English translation by Francis Rizzol/
Victor Morris and Rev. Robert Darling*

from La favorita

Leonora and Fernando's duet

Recitative
Fernando

7 You, most courteous maiden, messenger most gentle,
who always waits to greet me and care for my safety when I return here,
why do I not hear the sweet sound of your voice?
Come, why do you not answer?
Ines, I beg you, yes, I beg you!
The lady whom you serve, whom I serve, still refuses to tell me her rank or even her name.
Speak plainly: who is she?

Ines

I cannot tell you that.

Fernando

Her secret, can it be so dreadful?
So truly dreadful?

Ines

Far more than you imagine;
She is coming to find us: ask her to tell you.

Duet

Leonora

My beloved, my beloved!
My prayers are answered!
Come to me... I live for you!
Come, beloved, ah! come!
You, my only joy and comfort.
Here on earth, in heav'n above, ah!
My beloved, my joy and comfort.
Here on earth, in heav'n above.

Fernando

I left my father weeping: for love I braved the ocean, for love of you.

Leonora

But since that blessed moment fortune has been your guide,
protecting you from danger, leading you to my side.

Fernando

Should I rejoice?

Leonora

My wretchedness maybe exceeds your own!

Fernando

Ah, I beg you tell me what you fear, what you are hiding!
You must know that you command me, that I gladly would die for you.

Leonora

Ah! My destiny is a harsh one!

Fernando

But who are you?

Leonora

No, do not ask.

Fernando

Very well.
But first, your answer, if your love for me is so great.
Will you give yourself forever, as my wife to share my fate?

Leonora

Ah! If only... No, I cannot.

Fernando

You reject me? How can that be?
Ah! Cruel moment! At once I tumble to the depths of despair and dread.

Leonora

Ah! A vengeful, a spiteful God vents his wrath upon my head.
My loving soul would long for you and tremble to hold the letter I desired to give you;
but full of doubt.

Fernando

Go on!

Leonora

Have you not told me so many times the rules of honour guide your actions?

Fernando

I have done.

Leonora

Your future is contained here in this letter: but swear to... to leave me...

Fernando

To what? O heav'ns. How can I?
Abandon you? You ask that?
You know what you say?
I live while I love you: without you I die...
Though death's chilling summons I never shall fear,
to leave you forever, ah, that I cannot bear!
The whole world shall cry out to hear of my pain but not for a coward who abandoned his love when danger was near.

Leonora

You must go! I beg you!
Ah! leave me I say!
My heart longs to love you: for that you could die.
Though death's chilling summons I never shall fear,
to lose you forever with courage I must bear!
The whole world may cry out to hear of my pain



but not for a harlot who clung to her love when
danger was near.

Ines

Ah! Leonora... the king...

Leonora

Already? Heaven help me!

Fernando

The King!

Leonora

Can I bear it?

I shall follow... you take this and go!

Ah, leave me!

Fernando

Ah, no!

Leonora

I beg you, go!

Fernando

Abandon you? You ask that?

You know what you say?

I live while I love you: without you I die...

Leonora

Though death's chilling summons I never shall
fear,

to lose you forever, with courage I must bear!

Fernando

The whole world shall cry out to hear of my pain
but not for a coward who abandoned his love
when danger was near.

Leonora

The whole world may cry out to hear of my pain
but not for a harlot who clung to her love when
danger was near.

Farewell! Leave me! Go!

Fernando

Ah, no! I cannot!

*Alphonse Royer and Gustave Vaëz, English
translation by David Parry*

from Semele

Juno's aria

Juno

[8] Hence, Iris hence away!

Far from the realms of day.

O'er Scythian hills to the Maeotian lake,

A speedy flight we'll take, we'll take!

Hence, Iris, hence away,

There Somnus I'll compel his downy bed to
leave, and silent cell;

with noise and light I will his peace molest,

nor shall he sink again to pleasing rest,

till to my vow'd revenge he grants supplies,

and seals with sleep the wakeful dragon's eyes.

William Congreve, after Ovid

from Tancredi

Tancredi's aria

Tancredi

[9] Tell me, my beating heart, shall I be rewarded,
from my beloved dare I hope for grace?

Soon, soon you'll see me... we'll meet again...

Then your bright glances end all my pain.

I'm trembling, I'm sighing... to hear you

replying...

Love then will guide me, you'll be beside me.

We'll never part, never part.

Soon, soon you'll see me... we'll meet again...

Then your bright glances end all my pain.

*Gaetano Rossi after Voltaire, English translation by
Andrew Porter*

from Norma

Norma and Adalgisa's duet

Norma

[10] Take my children, take them with you,
be their guardian their defender...

To your care I now entrust them,

to you my children I now surrender:

al I ask is that they never

into slavery be abandoned.

But remember, Adalgisa,

that for you I was cast aside.

Adalgisa, ah, remember all the sorrow of my
heart.

Adalgisa

Norma, Norma beloved Norma,
be a mother to them and me.

Keep your children, ah no, do not ask me
to depart from my native country.

Norma

But you promised...

Adalgisa

Yes, I promised...

but for your sake, I'll leave my lover.

I shall go to seek Pollione,

and will tell him all you've told me.

To my vow he'll never hold me
when learns how you have suffered...

And in him new love will awaken,

he'll return to his first affection...

In his heart I know he loves you...

Norma, you'll reign in his heart again;

I am certain, he still loves you,

once more you'll reign in his heart.

Norma

I beseech him?... Ah! no. Ah never!

Adalgisa

Norma, believe me.

Norma

No. I'll not hear you. Leave me.

**Adalgisa**

Ah! I will not!

See, O Norma, beside you kneeling
your two children and hear their pleading.

Ah! For their sake if not for your sake,
ah have pity on them, I pray.

Norma

But why, oh why do you implore me
to surrender to soft affection?
Hope has left me, all hope has left me,
ah in my sorrow I only long to die.

Adalgisa

See kneeling before you your children.

Norma

Ah! But why do you implore me.

Adalgisa

Norma I beg you!

Norma

Ah! Leave me now...
He loves you.

Adalgisa

Soon he'll forget me.

Norma

And you?...

Adalgisa

I love him with all my heart,
but now I must renounce him.

Norma

Adalgisa! What then?

Adalgisa

I will restore Pollione,
or live with you in seclusion
far from the sight of the world.

Norma

Yes, you have conquered. Embrace me now.
I've found my dear friend again.

Adalgisa and Norma

Now and forever, beside you.
Always together, together we'll die.
Braving all danger, my loving hand will guide
you,
No cruel Roman will make us sigh.
Always at your side I'll defy all danger evermore.
Ah, yes!

*Felice Romani after Alexandre Soumet's verse
tragedy Norma, English translation by
Andrew Porter*

from Don Carlos

Princess Eboli's aria**Princess Eboli**

^[11] O hated gift, o fatal charm, a gift that heaven
bestowed in a fury!

My beauty made me so cruel and vengeful!
Vainly I curse my beauty's pow'r!
Although my bitter tears are flowing,
they cannot wash away my grief,
my repentance, my cruel anguish,
cannot change what I've done, or bring relief!
Vainly I curse, forever curse, my beauty's pow'r!

My Queen, I wronged you, you fall a victim
to my blind passions and my foolish love!
Far from the world, in some lonely cloister,
I shall take the veil, and be lost evermore!
Farewell, farewell, my Queen, farewell!
Oh heaven! And Carlos!...
He'll go tomorrow. He'll go to certain death!
Ah! One day is left me!
And hope once more revives me!
Ah! Yes a hope revives me!
For in that day I can save his life.
One day is left me, I bless that day
Ah I shall save his life!

*Joseph Méry and Camille du Locle after Schiller,
English translation by Andrew Porter*

from Romeo and Juliet

Juliet's Waltz Song**Juliet**

^[12] Ah! Ev'ry moment in this dream world is
enchantment for me once more!

Sweetest treasure I will keep you for my pleasure
for evermore!
Heady pleasure's not for ever, it only lasts a day.
Comes the hour all turns sour hearts must yield
to love's way,
And then fortune flees far away!
Ev'ry moment in this dream world is
enchantment just like before!
Sweetest treasure I will keep you for my pleasure
for evermore!
Shelter'd from winter's power let me sleep if I
may
And let me breathe the flower before it fades
away.
Sweetest treasure only for my pleasure, as it was
before, forever more!
Just like before, for evermore!

*Jules Barbier and Michel Carré after Shakespeare,
English translation by Kenneth Richardson*



Jennifer Larmore as Romeo in the Festival Vaison la Romaine's production of
Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*

66



Jennifer Larmore as Jane Seymour in Nice Opera's production of
Donizetti's *Anna Bolena*

67



The Opera In English Series

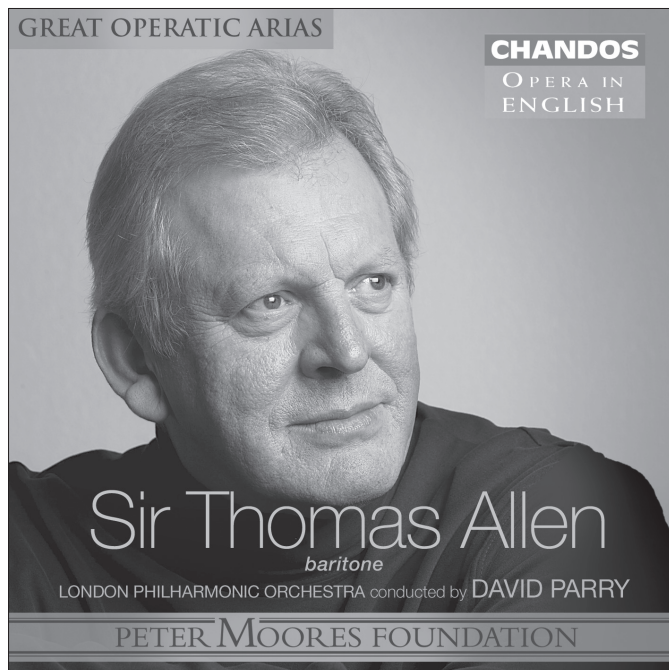
CHAN 3011(2)	Donizetti: Don Pasquale	CHAN 3079(2)	Verdi: Falstaff
CHAN 3027(2)	Donizetti: The Elixir of Love	CHAN 3116(2)	Verdi: A Masked Ball
CHAN 3083(2)	Donizetti: Lucia of Lammermoor	CHAN 3136(2)	Verdi: Nabucco
CHAN 3017(2)	Donizetti: Mary Stuart	CHAN 3068(2)	Verdi: Otello
CHAN 3073	Janet Baker sings scenes from Mary Stuart	CHAN 3030(2)	Verdi: Rigoletto
		CHAN 3023(2)	Verdi: La traviata
CHAN 3003	Leoncavallo: Pagliacci (The Touring Company)	CHAN 3036(2)	Verdi: Il trovatore (The Troubadour)
CHAN 3004	Mascagni: Cavalleria rusticana (Rustic Chivalry)	CHAN 3067	A Verdi Celebration
		CHAN 3091(2)	Bizet: Carmen
CHAN 3005(2)	Pagliacci & Cavalleria rusticana	CHAN 3014(3)	Gounod: Faust
CHAN 3008(2)	Puccini: La bohème	CHAN 3089(2)	Gounod: Faust (abridged)
CHAN 3070(2)	Puccini: Madam Butterfly	CHAN 3033(2)	Massenet: Werther
CHAN 3000(2)	Puccini: Tosca	CHAN 3134(2)	Poulenc: The Carmelites
CHAN 3066	Jane Eaglen sings Tosca	CHAN 3130(3)	Berg: Lulu
CHAN 3086(2)	Puccini: Turandot	CHAN 3094(2)	Berg: Wozzeck
CHAN 3025(2)	Rossini: The Barber of Seville	CHAN 3019(3)	Handel: Julius Caesar
CHAN 3097(2)	Rossini: The Thieving Magpie	CHAN 3072	Janet Baker sings scenes from Julius Caesar
CHAN 3074(2)	Verdi: Aida		
CHAN 3052(2)	Verdi: Ernani	CHAN 3081(2)	Mozart: The Abduction from the Seraglio

Great Operatic Arias

CHAN 3057(3)	Mozart: Don Giovanni	CHAN 3127	Christine Brewer
CHAN 3103(2)	Mozart: Idomeneo	CHAN 3096	Elizabeth Futral
CHAN 3113(3)	Mozart: The Marriage of Figaro	CHAN 3035	Yvonne Kenny
CHAN 3121(2)	Mozart: The Magic Flute	CHAN 3099	Yvonne Kenny 2
CHAN 3022	Strauss: Der Rosenkavalier (The Knight of the Rose, highlights)	CHAN 3049	Della Jones
		CHAN 3010	Diana Montague
CHAN 3119(2)	Wagner: The Flying Dutchman	CHAN 3093	Diana Montague 2
CHAN 3054(3)	Wagner: The Rhinegold	CHAN 3112	Barry Banks
CHAN 3038(4)	Wagner: The Valkyrie	CHAN 3006	Bruce Ford
CHAN 3045(4)	Wagner: Siegfried	CHAN 3100	Bruce Ford 2
CHAN 3060(5)	Wagner: Twilight of the Gods	CHAN 3088	Bruce Ford sings Viennese Operetta
CHAN 3065(16)	Wagner: Complete Ring Cycle	CHAN 3013	Dennis O'Neill
CHAN 3133	Bartók: Bluebeard's Castle	CHAN 3105	Dennis O'Neill 2
CHAN 3101(2)	Janáček: The Cunning Little Vixen	CHAN 3085	Alan Opie
CHAN 3029(2)	Janáček: Osud (Fate)	CHAN 3077	Andrew Shore
CHAN 3106(2)	Janáček: Jenůfa	CHAN 3032	Alastair Miles
CHAN 3138(2)	Janáček: The Makropulos Case	CHAN 3044	John Tomlinson
CHAN 3007	Mussorgsky: Boris Godunov (highlights)	CHAN 3076	John Tomlinson 2
CHAN 3128(2)	Smetana: The Bartered Bride	CHAN 3118	Sir Thomas Allen
CHAN 3042(2)	Tchaikovsky: Eugene Onegin	CHAN 3078	Baroque Celebration



Also Available



CHAN 3118

70

Vocal and language consultant: Ludmilla Andrew
Staging director: Charles Kilpatrick
Music Librarian: Jacqui Compton

Session photos by Bill Cooper

Recording producer Brian Couzens
Sound engineer Ralph Couzens
Assistant engineer & editor Jonathan Cooper
Operas administrator Sue Shortridge
Recording venue Blackheath Halls, London; 12–15 September 2006
Front Photograph by Douglas Robertson
Back cover Photo of David Parry by Russell Duncan
Design & typesetting Cassidy Rayne Creative
Booklet editor Kara Reed
Music Hire Concord Music Hire Library/Ricordi (track 2), Concord Music Hire Library (tracks 3, 4, 11 & 12)
Publisher Schott Music GmbH & Co KG (track 6), Ricordi (tracks 7 & 10), Kings Music Publishers (track 8), G Ricordi & C SpA di Milano (track 9), Edwin F Kalmus & Co Inc. (track 12)
Copyright Casa Musicale Sonzogno di Piero Ostali – Milano (track 1)
© 2007 Chandos Records Ltd
© 2007 Chandos Records Ltd

71

GREAT OPERATIC ARIAS

CHANDOS DIGITAL

CHAN 3142

Jennifer Larmore

Francesco Cilea

from Adriana Lecouvreur

1 'Star of the Evening' 4:18

Gaetano Donizetti

from La favorita (The Mistress)

2 'O my beloved' 8:02

Giuseppe Verdi

from Il trovatore (The Troubadour)

3 'Fierce flames are raging' 2:54

Amilcare Ponchielli

*from La Gioconda*4 'Love like mine is the light of creation'
with Susan Patterson soprano 3:43

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

from Don Giovanni

5 'That ungrateful man betrayed me' 5:46

Richard Wagner

from Rienzi

6 'Where was I?' 9:19

Gaetano Donizetti

*from La favorita*7 'My beloved' 10:26
with Colin Lee tenor and Fflur Wyn soprano

George Frideric Handel

from Semele

8 'Hence, Iris hence away!' 3:40

Gioachino Rossini

from Tancredi

9 'Tell me, my beating heart' 2:56

Vincenzo Bellini

*from Norma*10 'See, O Norma'
with Susan Patterson soprano 10:49

Giuseppe Verdi

from Don Carlos

11 'O hated gift' 4:35

Charles Gounod

from Romeo and Juliet

12 Juliet's Waltz Song 3:44

TT 71:27

Philharmonia Orchestra
David Parry