



CHAN 3152(3)

CHANDOS
OPERA IN
ENGLISH

Così

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Così fan tutte or The School for Lovers

Opera buffa in two acts

Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte,
English version by Marmaduke Browne,
adapted by John Cox

Fiordiligi } ladies from Ferrara,
Dorabella } sisters, living in Naples
Guglielmo, an officer, Fiordiligi's lover
Ferrando, an officer, Dorabella's lover
Despina, maidservant to Fiordiligi and Dorabella
Don Alfonso, an old philosopher

Janice Watson *soprano*
Diana Montague *mezzo-soprano*
Christopher Maltman *baritone*
Toby Spence *tenor*
Lesley Garrett *soprano*
Sir Thomas Allen *baritone*

Geoffrey Mitchell Choir
Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

Gareth Hancock *assistant conductor*

Sir Charles Mackerras

COMPACT DISC ONE

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[1] Overture	4:05	[p. 96]
Act I		
[2] No 1, Trio: 'Suspect Dorabella?'	1:53	[p. 96]
[3] Recitative: 'Swords or pistols?'	0:50	[p. 96]
<i>Ferrando, Guglielmo, Don Alfonso</i>		
[4] No 2, Trio: 'Woman's faith is like the phoenix'	1:09	[p. 97]
<i>Don Alfonso, Ferrando, Guglielmo</i>		
[5] Recitative: 'A poetical fiction!'	1:19	[p. 97]
[6] No 3, Trio: 'I shall hire a band of players'	2:21	[p. 99]
<i>Ferrando, Guglielmo, Don Alfonso</i>		
[7] No 4, Duet: 'This portrait alone is the face of Adonis'	4:18	[p. 99]
[8] Recitative: 'I can't think what's the matter'	0:44	[p.100]
<i>Fiordiligi, Dorabella</i>		
[9] Recitative: 'Here they are'	0:22	[p.100]
<i>Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Don Alfonso</i>		
[10] No 5, Aria: 'Let me try. My courage fails'	0:38	[p.101]
<i>Don Alfonso</i>		
[11] Recitative: 'Tell us, for pity's sake'	1:00	[p.101]
<i>Fiordiligi, Don Alfonso, Dorabella</i>		
[12] No 6, Quintet: 'Courage fails me! For no evasion'	4:07	[p.102]
<i>Guglielmo, Ferrando, Don Alfonso, Fiordiligi, Dorabella</i>		
[13] Recitative: 'It's a comedy, charming!'	0:33	[p.103]
<i>Don Alfonso, Ferrando, Fiordiligi, Dorabella</i>		

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[14] No 8, Chorus: 'Oh, the soldier's life for me!'	1:30	[p.103]
<i>Chorus</i>		
[15] Recitative: 'My friends, the time is flying'	0:34	[p.104]
<i>Don Alfonso, Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando, Guglielmo</i>		
[16] No 9, Quintet: 'You'll write long letters often'	2:32	[p.104]
<i>Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando, Guglielmo, Don Alfonso, Chorus</i>		
[17] Recitative: 'Are they gone?'	0:35	[p.105]
<i>Dorabella, Don Alfonso, Fiordiligi</i>		
[18] No 10 Trio: 'O wind gently blowing'	2:43	[p.105]
<i>Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Don Alfonso</i>		
[19] Recitative: 'So far all's going splendidly!'	1:05	[p.106]
<i>Don Alfonso</i>		
[20] Recitative: 'A hell of an existence'	0:58	[p.106]
<i>Despina</i>		
[21] 'My ladies, here is your chocolate and biscuits'	1:24	[p.106]
<i>Despina, Fiordiligi, Dorabella</i>		
[22] No 11, Aria: 'Cease not, remorseless love'	1:46	[p.107]
<i>Dorabella</i>		
[23] Recitative: 'Signora Dorabella, Signora Fiordiligi'	1:36	[p.107]
<i>Despina, Dorabella, Fiordiligi</i>		
[24] No 12, Aria: 'In lovers and in soldiers'	2:36	[p.109]
<i>Despina</i>		
[25] Recitative: 'What a silence!'	2:21	[p.109]
<i>Don Alfonso, Despina</i>		

	Time	Page
²⁶ No 13, Sextet: 'I've the honour to present you' <i>Don Alfonso, Ferrando, Guglielmo, Despina, Fiordiligi, Dorabella</i>	4:18	[p.111]
²⁷ Recitative: 'What an outcry!' <i>Don Alfonso, Dorabella, Fiordiligi, Ferrando, Guglielmo</i>	3:38	[p.112]
²⁸ No 14, Aria: 'Like a fortress in ocean founded' <i>Fiordiligi</i>	4:28	[p.114]
²⁹ Recitative: 'Stay, I implore you!' <i>Ferrando, Guglielmo, Don Alfonso, Dorabella, Fiordiligi</i>	0:43	[p.114]
³⁰ No 15, Aria: 'O vision so charming' <i>Guglielmo</i>	1:42	[p.115]
³¹ No 16, Trio: 'You seem delighted!' <i>Don Alfonso, Ferrando, Guglielmo</i>	0:53	[p.115]
³² Recitative: 'When you've quite finished laughing' <i>Don Alfonso, Guglielmo, Ferrando</i>	0:52	[p.116]
³³ No 17, Aria: 'Her eye so alluring' <i>Ferrando</i>	4:50	[p.116]

TT 64:43

COMPACT DISC TWO

¹ No 18, Finale: 'Why has fate my life enshrouded' <i>Fiordiligi, Dorabella</i>	2:53	[p.117]
² 'To die is all I long for' <i>Ferrando, Guglielmo, Don Alfonso, Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Despina</i>	4:55	[p.117]

	Time	Page
³ 'Now, ladies, calm yourselves' <i>Don Alfonso, Ferrando, Guglielmo, Despina, Fiordiligi, Dorabella</i>	8:50	[p.120]
Act II		
⁴ Recitative: 'Well, I decare, you are a funny pair of young ladies' <i>Despina, Fiordiligi, Dorabella</i>	2:26	[p.124]
⁵ No 19, Aria: 'At fifteen a girl already must be truly wise' <i>Despina</i>	3:28	[p.125]
⁶ Recitative: 'Well, sister! What do you think?' <i>Fiordiligi, Dorabella</i>	1:34	[p.126]
⁷ No 20, Duet: 'I prefer the gentle dark one' <i>Dorabella, Fiordiligi</i>	2:53	[p.127]
⁸ Recitative: 'Come at once to the garden' <i>Don Alfonso, Dorabella</i>	0:22	[p.128]
⁹ No 21, Duet and Chorus: 'Gentle zephyr, softly sighing' <i>Ferrando, Guglielmo, Chorus</i>	3:03	[p.128]
¹⁰ Recitative: 'What is this masquerading?' <i>Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Despina, Ferrando, Guglielmo, Don Alfonso</i>	0:51	[p.128]
¹¹ No 22, Quartet: 'Now give me your hand' <i>Don Alfonso, Ferrando, Guglielmo, Despina</i>	2:34	[p.129]
¹² Recitative: 'Isn't the weather lovely!' <i>Fiordiligi, Ferrando, Dorabella, Guglielmo</i>	2:14	[p.130]
¹³ No 23, Duet: 'This heart that I give you' <i>Guglielmo, Dorabella</i>	4:16	[p.132]

	Time	Page
¹⁴ Recitative: 'Cruel one, would you leave me?' <i>Ferrando, Fiordiligi</i>	1:30	[p.133]
¹⁵ Recitative: 'He's leaving. Listen!...'	1:34	[p.134]
¹⁶ No 25, Rondo: 'Ah, my love, I pray forgive me' <i>Fiordiligi</i>	7:30	[p.134]

TT 51:11

COMPACT DISC THREE

¹ Recitative: 'We've done it!' <i>Ferrando, Guglielmo</i>	3:26	[p.134]
² No 26, Aria: 'Ladies have such variations' <i>Guglielmo</i>	3:12	[p.136]
³ Recitative: 'Ah! My brain is distracted!'	1:29	[p.137]
⁴ No 27, Cavatina: 'Her treason is poison' <i>Ferrando</i>	2:02	[p.137]
⁵ Recitative: 'Now at last you are acting as a sane woman should' <i>Despina, Dorabella, Fiordiligi</i>	1:30	[p.137]
⁶ No 28, Aria: 'Young love is unrelenting' <i>Dorabella</i>	2:55	[p.138]
⁷ Recitative: 'All the world is conspiring' <i>Fiordiligi, Guglielmo, Despina, Don Alfonso</i>	2:10	[p.138]

	Time	Page
⁸ No 29, Duet: 'All too slowly the hours are fleeting' <i>Fiordiligi, Ferrando</i>	5:11	[p.140]
⁹ Recitative: 'That's enough for me!' <i>Guglielmo, Don Alfonso, Ferrando</i>	1:40	[p.141]
¹⁰ No 30, Aria: 'Man accuses the woman' <i>Don Alfonso, Ferrando, Guglielmo</i>	0:59	[p.142]
¹¹ Recitative: 'Well, gentlemen, you've won them' <i>Despina, Ferrando, Guglielmo, Don Alfonso</i>	0:44	[p.142]
¹² No 31, Finale: 'Come, my friends, no more delaying' <i>Despina, Chorus, Don Alfonso</i>	1:47	[p.143]
¹³ 'May the love, that has united then' <i>Chorus, Ferrando, Guglielmo, Fiordiligi, Dorabella</i>	4:03	[p.143]
¹⁴ 'Happy lovers! Fate conniving' <i>Don Alfonso, Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando, Guglielmo, Despina, Chorus</i>	3:29	[p.144]
¹⁵ 'Joy once more now our sorrow replaces' <i>Ferrando, Guglielmo, Don Alfonso, Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Despina</i>	8:11	[p.146]
¹⁶ 'Happy is the man who calmly takes life strictly as he finds it' <i>Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Despina, Ferrando, Guglielmo, Don Alfonso</i>	1:42	[p.149]

TT 44:40

On session: Toby Spence



On session: Christopher Maltman



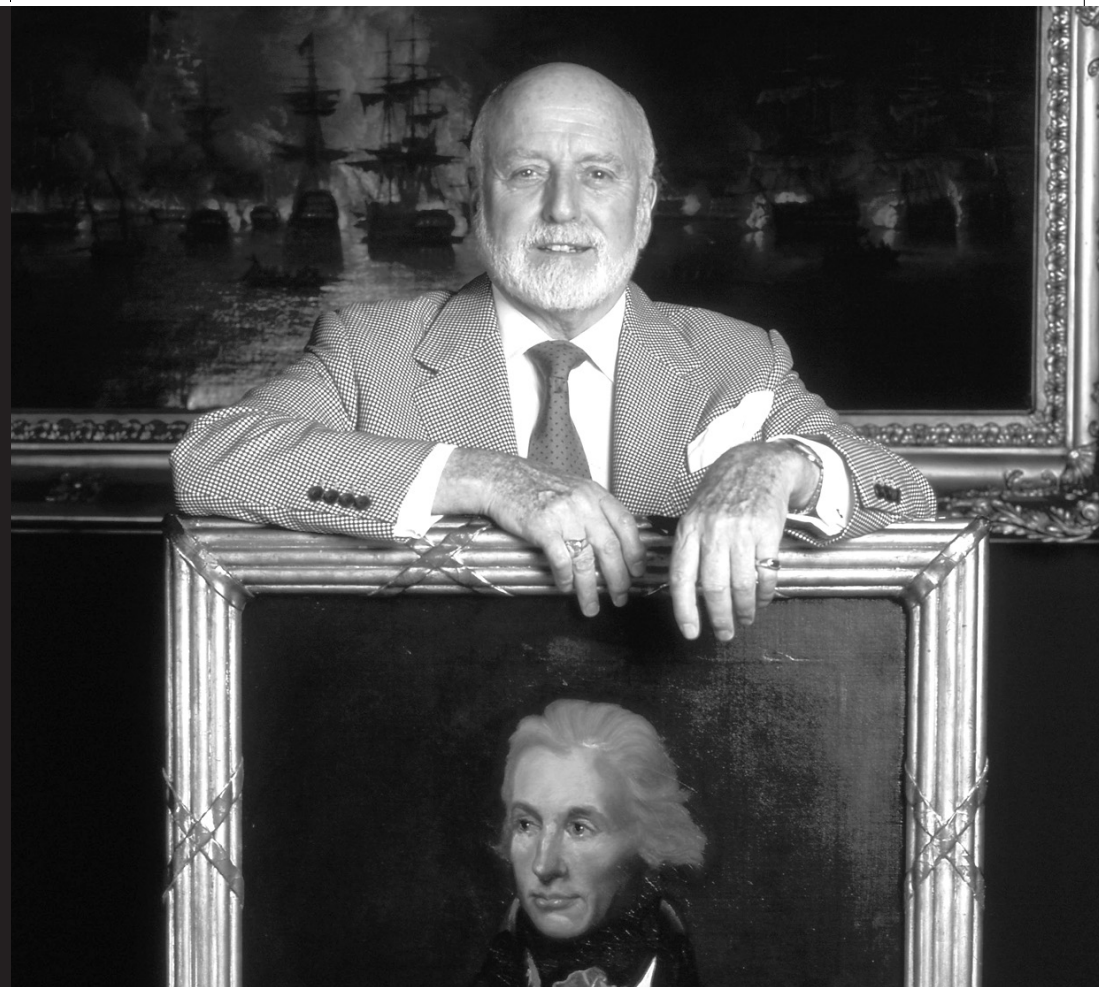
The title *Così fan tutte* is almost impossible to translate without obscuring the universal experience so lightly but profoundly expressed in Mozart's depiction of human love and frailty.

And who better to reveal all the irony, wit and pathos of Mozart's mercurial score than Sir Charles Mackerras – a great Mozartian – in harness with the wonderful musicians of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and a great cast. Prepare to be seduced!

Peter Moores

Sir Peter Moores, CBE, DL
April 2008

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



‘all the girls act like this’

Così fan tutte – ‘all women act like this’ – was conceived at relative leisure (but composed in a hurry) during 1789 to an existing libretto by the Abbé Lorenzo da Ponte, the Vienna court opera’s official poet and Mozart’s collaborator on *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*. The cast was hand-picked by its creators. The librettist’s current mistress (and as a cleric forbidden to marry, da Ponte had many) Adriana Ferraresi del Bene was Fiordiligi. He called her his ‘misfortune’, was very frank about her lack of obvious attractions, but liked her eyes and mouth. The Don Alfonso was Mozart’s first Dr Bartolo/Antonio and Commendatore/Masetto, the Despina his first Cherubino, and the Guglielmo his first Figaro. As Mozart had written music elsewhere for the other singers in the cast, he knew all the voices well and worked to their strengths (a vocally wide-ranging two-tempo display aria, ‘Ah, my love, I pray forgive me’ for Fiordiligi) and current limitations (only the briefest of arias for Alfonso).

The new opera, with a surprising number of cuts that were probably designed to spare rehearsal time, was premiered at Vienna’s

Burgtheater on January 26, 1790 and was (despite frequent comments to the contrary) a fair success. The premiere was the most heavily attended opera performance of the 1789/90 season and the diary comments and reviews that survive were favourable. The work was given four more times before the death a few weeks later of the Emperor, Mozart’s inconsistent patron Joseph II. This was a double stroke of bad luck for the composer – the theatres were closed for a number of weeks of court mourning just as *Così* was getting into its stride, and the new Emperor, Leopold II, cared little for Mozart, for da Ponte (who was fired), for their chosen casts (some of them were also dismissed) or, indeed, for so-called *opera buffa* (‘non-tragic opera’) in general. Under the circumstances it was quite an achievement that five further performances – Mozart himself conducted at least the last one – were given during that summer.

After that, however, *Così* became something of a Cinderella among Mozart’s mature output. The next Viennese performance was not until 1794. Throughout much of the nineteenth century commentators and impresarios,

famously starting with Beethoven, considered the libretto both immoral and trivial and it was inevitably bowdlerised, or changed wholesale, for performance. Mozart was considered to have committed a grievous error of judgement in setting such a subject to his ‘divine’ music. The tide turned from 1897 onwards when a sequence of major conductors (and composers) returned to what Mozart and da Ponte actually wrote – Richard Strauss in a version prepared by Hermann Levi (Wagner’s first *Parsifal* conductor) in Munich, Gustav Mahler at the opera’s original home in Vienna, Sir Thomas Beecham in London, and Fritz Busch – in a 1934 staging by Carl Ebert at the newly opened Glyndebourne Festival which led to the opera’s first-ever recording.

So what was it that was considered so shocking, immoral or trivial in the opera’s text? Da Ponte’s poem seemed to be one of his most ‘original’, rather than the straight translation of a contemporary play (as was the case with *Figaro*) or the extended reworking of another’s contemporary libretto (*Giovanni*) which were the stock-in-trade of the practising eighteenth-century librettist. In fact, the *Così* libretto (knowingly subtitled *La scuola degli amanti*, ‘The School for Lovers’) was heavily dependent on a then widely known sixteenth-century

epic, Ariosto’s *Orlando furioso*. From it da Ponte drew names of characters and dramatic themes and – in a kind of spot-the-quote game that many of his more sophisticated Viennese spectators would have enjoyed playing – borrowings or adaptations of whole images and phrases. He freely plundered his own libretti *Il finto cieco* and *Una cosa rara*. He was also on well-trodden dramatic ground with the central theme of lovers testing each others’ fidelity by the use of disguise; examples went back in time to Zeus in Greek mythology, to Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* or to the more recent couples on trial in Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and Marivaux’s *La Dispute* (1744, and a success in Vienna).

So, nothing too new or frightening there. Yet court composer Antonio Salieri – the first musician to whom da Ponte offered his libretto – abandoned composition as early as the second men’s Trio in Act I, declaring the text ‘unworthy of musical invention’. (A glimpse at the surviving sketches shows how his setting almost wholly misses the boastful ironies of the young officers’ championing of their ladies to Alfonso.) And Salieri – not as much of a nemesis for Mozart as twentieth-century theatre and film has liked to imagine – was the composer among

da Ponte's regular collaborators whose wide reading and literary *savoir-faire* led him to esteem the Italian higher even than Mozart. Surely he most of all should have appreciated da Ponte's classical references?

Yet it seems that a situation arose like the one which was to see the good citizens of mid-nineteenth-century Venice (and their censors) forcing Verdi to have *La traviata*, his contemporary drama of Parisian kept women, premiered in costumes and scenery from Louis XIV's time. Salieri, and many subsequent performers, promoters and spectators, were upset about *Così*'s very modern take on sexuality, character and what could be used and discussed onstage. Firstly there were the obvious contemporary references. Despina is given a whole aria in Act I ('In lovers and in soldiers for constancy you look') to lampoon the military – of which 1790 Vienna was full – with their 'kiss 'em and leave 'em' morality. The men's 'Albanian' disguises evoke Austria's current wars against 'Eastern' powers, especially Turkey, always the butt of crude Viennese theatrical humour (like Mozart's own Seraglio opera). Indeed Despina's repeated reaction to the disguised lovers' first appearance is typical of what one might call the tabloid comments of the day – 'Lord preserve us, how peculiar!

Funny outfits, hairy features, sure they must be foreign creatures, I'd say Turkish at a guess. Slovakish? Turkish?'. Despina indeed is almost a walking mouthpiece for both the contemporary man on the street and for Mozart's and da Ponte's social observations. And it's her idea for the Act I doctor 'cure' of the poison which literally brings onstage the magnet(ism) of Franz Anton Mesmer who, in real life, was a friend and regular correspondent of Mozart and his family. This theatre of the burlesque – almost Mozart looking forward to his 'popular' musical, *The Magic Flute* – may further have confused those expecting more restrained *opera buffa* from a 'classical' composer.

Next came the in-jokes. The work's very main title is a quotation from a previous Mozart/da Ponte work – 'così fan tutte le belle', 'all the girls act like this' from *The Marriage of Figaro* – while the dramatic personae description of the sisters Fiordiligi and Dorabella as 'ladies of Ferrara' references both the singer Adriana Ferraresi del Bene and the then popular belief that ladies from that town were of easy virtue. And did the fact of their being sisters suggest Mozart's own wooing of the Weber girls, rejected by Aloysia then accepted by Constanze? Quite a number

of changes to the libretto submitted to Salieri were made when the project became Mozart's, presumably at his suggestion.

Then came directly sexual imagery. Originally the opera was set in Trieste. The move to Naples was made undoubtedly to pick up on that city's reputation as a decadent, Southern gilded palace of sin and the erupting presence (glimpsed in the scenery) of the volcano Mount Vesuvius, as blatantly obvious an image of arousal then as now. And when Fiordiligi, running away from (the disguised) Ferrando's attentions, tells us that she has seen 'a basilisk, a hydra, a vicious scorpion', she's probably not describing some mythological oriental painting. Nor does the sex seem to stop at innuendo. The music and imagery of, for example, Dorabella's Act II 'Young love is unrelenting' aria, is surely the excitement, and testimony, of someone's first experience of sexual love.

'I swear to you that *Figaro* and *Giovanni* are the work of an amateur compared to *Così*', wrote the experienced Mozart interpreter and French composer Reynaldo Hahn. In addition to the verbal and psychological content of da Ponte's libretto the quiet radicalism of Mozart's musical setting would hardly have pleased conservative spirits. Apart from reflecting

the text and emotions with illustrative instrumental detail that might be termed pre-Romantic, Mozart placed an almost unheard of amount of the story in ensemble writing, another move towards the naturalistic, through-composed operatic narration he had pioneered in the Finale of Act II of *Figaro*.

Nowadays we find compelling psychological depth in what our forefathers considered immoral and called trivial. *Così* can seem now more profound and universal a drama than either *Figaro* or *Giovanni* because it does not depend on a specific political/social context (like the aristocrat/servant quarrels of the other da Ponte operas), but on the context of humanity. The couples of the opera are not just involved in sexual politics but in the whole question of honesty to themselves and to others. It's almost like psychoanalysis in Vienna 100 years before Freud. What is Alfonso's motivation for his challenge to Ferrando and Guglielmo? Do the young officers really believe their boasts about their girls (whom they hardly seem to know), or are they actually looking to find out if the opposite is true? Is their disguise deliberately excessive and unconvincing?

In the hundred different ways in which *Così fan tutte* has been staged since its entrance

into the regular repertoire in the 1950s, interpretations have focussed particularly on the exact motivations of the characters. Is Alfonso a heartless, chauvinistic cynic, out to make mischief to compensate for some *mal d'amour* of his own, or is he a Prospero-like educator of young peoples' essential life experiences? Is Despina a cynical conspirator bought by Alfonso's purse, a realist if brutally frank tutor to the girls in sexuality, or a working-class stirrer (like Figaro and Leporello) of pampered middle- and upper-class assumptions? And does she know that the 'Albanians' are really Ferrando and Guglielmo, or is she as shocked by their final revelation as her charges are, or by the fact that she's been taken for a massive ride by everyone? All these options are wholly possible, and playable – even within a strictly literal view of text and music.

The ideas of the French Revolution, actually in progress as the opera was premiered, had a definite effect on *Così*, although less obvious than on *Figaro* or even on *Giovanni*. On the negative side, the reforms of the Third Estate were never to reach the Austrian Empire in any literal form. The workers stayed the workers, (even when Napoleon entered Vienna) and the Despinas of this world, however witty

and clever, remained used and exploited at the bottom of the heap. On the other hand, the women in these operas drive the drama more actively than in most *opera buffa*, and the charge of sexism routinely laid at *Così's* door is rebuffed somewhat by the liberal manner in which Fiordiligi and Dorabella come to embrace their new lovers who, in their Albanian disguises, represent quite a walk on the wild side for such genteel middle-class ladies.

But what about the ending? Is it really possible that, after such pain, such direct contact with another(s) partner the status quo can be restored? Haven't the more *buffo*, more superficial couple – Dorabella, Guglielmo – discovered each other as surely as the more poetic, more thoughtful (and higher-voiced) Fiordiligi and Ferrando? For the eighteenth century, and for Mozart and da Ponte, this was simply not a problem. The 'walk on the wild side' had happened within the classical unities of time (one day from dawn to dusk) and place (*pace* the opening coffee house scene where the men make their bet), and simply came to an end at the end of the play. But Mozart and da Ponte, in keeping with their new realism that upset and challenged 100 years' worth of commentators, cannot let quite their play end there. Alfonso concludes 'True the plot was

my invention and completed my intention: I desired but to persuade them nothing's perfect here below!... Now you all must laugh it off, for there is nothing you can do.' Ferrando and Guglielmo accept their girls' intentions to be faithful, but only with the caveat 'I'll believe the word you've spoken, to the proof no more I'll go.' Despina, hardly comprehending what has happened, threatens a kind of revenge – 'Take good care if fooling others, someone else may well fool you.' Only then do the actors step out of character to offer abstract, enlightened advice to the audience: 'Happy is the man who calmly takes life strictly as he finds it and with humour and patience only lets sweet reason be his guide.'

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A note from the conductor

In 1890 *Così fan tutte* under the title of *School for Lovers*, was performed by students of the seven-year-old Royal College of Music at the Savoy Theatre, London. The RCM Director, Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, was the conductor, and a new English translation was made for this centenary performance by the Rev Marmaduke E. Browne. Browne was a choirmaster and church organist and although

the subject of opera might be deemed a bit unsuitable for the attention of a man of the cloth, Browne's rhymes are often extremely witty, even if they occasionally veer quite a long way from da Ponte's original. Consider the first utterance of the love-sick girls as they gaze in rapture at the portraits of their lovers:

'This portrait alone is

The face of Adonis.'

Answered by:

'Ah, then it must follow

That this is Apollo.'

Or take Guglielmo's diatribe against women. Where da Ponte repeats 'la fate a tanti e tanti' over and over, Browne cleverly varies it each time: 'Ladies have such variations, permutations, fluctuations', 'Alas their vacillations, complications', 'the ladies' retractions, abjurations', 'abberations, hesitations' etc. Although written about a century later than da Ponte, Browne's version does seem to have a flavour of Pope or Sheridan. Perhaps his quaintest rhyme is Don Alfonso's famous summing up:

'Spite of wisdom, folly, plainness or beauty,
every woman's the same, *Così fan tutte*.'

(rhyming 'beauty' with 'tutte' not 'tutti!')

The Browne translation was still used at Sadler's Wells into the 1960s despite the

general use of E.J. Dent's new translations of may well-known operas. When I conducted *Così* at the London Coliseum in John Cox's delightful production in 1980 we still used Browne's version with many revisions by Cox, mainly to bring the English text nearer to da Ponte's meaning and the musical rhythms nearer to Mozart's original. It is this version of Browne's text which is used in this recording.

As a matter of fact, that 1890 student production was not the first to be done in English. *Così fan tutte*, first heard in London in 1811, was performed at the Royal English Opera as *Tit for Tat* or *The Tables Turned!* in 1828. One wonders what that version, altered and adapted from *Così fan tutte*, could have been like, especially as there was a second piece, *The Bottle Imp!* (founded on a popular German legend) on the bill as well!

At its first performance in Vienna in 1790, Mozart allowed many passages to be omitted from the score, for what reason we do not know, since some truly sublime moments were cut, notably the canon quartet near the beginning of the second finale. Today's performances do not usually make such drastic exisions, but traditionally two numbers have been omitted, a duet for the men in Act I, and a third aria for Ferrando, 'Ah lo veggio',

thus preserving the status quo of two arias per character as in most comic operas of the period. Similarly, small cuts have traditionally been made in the duet for Ferrando and Fiordiligi, the chorus in the Act II finale and in many of the recitatives. Although present day recordings tend to present an opera complete without any cuts, I chose to record this English version of *Così fan tutte* with the traditional cuts, thus making it closer to a staged performance.

As regards the style of the performance on the recording, it is indeed a pleasure having the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment lending its expertise in tonal colour, phrasing and rhythmic impulse to Mozart's wonderful score. Naturally, our singers all make extensive use of the vocal *appoggiatura*, that inflexion whereby the first of two or three syllables in a words are sung a note higher (or lower) than written. This helps to point the text and give it greater accentuation flow.

Mozart's singers for *Così fan tutte* were all quite eminent and would have automatically sung cadenzas at *fermatas* and added the occasional decoration to the vocal lines in arias.

In the case of this opera, we are lucky that a late eighteenth-century ornamented version is still preserved in the Fürstenberg Library at Donaueschingen. Several of these ornaments

and cadenzas, particularly in Fiordiligi's arias, have been used in this recording.

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Synopsis

COMPACT DISC ONE

[1] Overture

Act I

A coffee shop

[2] – [4] Two young officers, Ferrando and Guglielmo, boast to their older friend Don Alfonso about the fidelity of their loves, the sisters Fiordiligi and Dorabella. [5] – [6] Don Alfonso bets them 100 guineas that he will be able to prove to them that very day that their ladies are just like all others – temperamentally unfaithful. They accept the wager and promise, on their honour as soldiers, to do everything Don Alfonso asks them and not to tell their sweethearts.

A garden by the seashore

[7] – [8] Fiordiligi and Dorabella are sighing over pictures of their men, although Fiordiligi confesses to 'a silly desire for an adventure'. [9] – [11] Don Alfonso enters, feigning distress, and

tells them that their officers are both under orders for 'active service' and must leave 'this morning'. [12] – [13] He permits a brief farewell, laughing at the girls' excessive anguish but counselling the men that the game has only just begun. [14] – [17] Soldiers arrive to take Ferrando and Guglielmo away in a boat; [18] – [19] the girls and Don Alfonso wish them a safe journey ('O wind gently blowing').

A pretty room in the sisters' house

[20] – [21] Despina, the sisters' chambermaid, laments her 'hell of an existence' in service. [22] – [24] When Dorabella talks of breathing her last 'in the toils of love', Despina advises her sorrowing mistresses to amuse themselves while their lovers are away, mocking their belief in finding 'constancy' in 'lovers and in soldiers'. The girls flee in horror at the idea.

[25] Despina is not pleased to see her old acquaintance Don Alfonso, but he buys her help in introducing the girls to alternative suitors. [26] Guglielmo and Ferrando arrive disguised (Despina wonders if they are 'Turkish' or 'Slovakish') and declare their passionate love for Fiordiligi and Dorabella. [27] – [30] To help their pleading, Don Alfonso pretends that they are old friends of his, but

the sisters resist all blandishments, especially Fiordiligi who stands 'like a fortress'. [31] – [33] Together with Don Alfonso the men laugh at their apparent victory ('her eye so alluring, my hope reassuring').

COMPACT DISC TWO

A pretty garden with two grassy banks

[1] – [2] The 'Albanians' now pretend to swallow arsenic in their desperation to be loved by the sisters; Don Alfonso and Despina encourage the girls to 'tenderly support' the dying men – and go off in search of a doctor. Just as the sisters admit their hearts are moved to 'pity', [3] the doctor (Despina in disguise, recognised by the men but not the girls) arrives, boasting of linguistic skills and proposing a cure invented by 'Dr Mesmer'. The magnet, and much physical contact from the girls, restores the Albanians to health, but Fiordiligi and Dorabella are still not ready to yield.

Act II

A room in the sisters' house

[4] Further teased and then persuaded by Despina ([5] – [6] 'at fifteen a girl already must be truly wise and worldly'), the sisters decide that there is nothing to be ashamed of in

'seeking diversion to ward off melancholy'.

[7] – [8] Dorabella, Ferrando's lady, chooses to flirt with 'the gentle dark one' (Guglielmo) and Fiordiligi with 'the fair one' (Ferrando).

In the garden by the seashore

[9] – [11] *An al fresco* serenade for the sisters has been arranged by their new suitors. After it is over Despina and Don Alfonso leave the four to their own devices. [12] Guglielmo flirts with Dorabella, offering her a locket which, to his horror and fascination, she accepts. He then succeeds in removing her own locket, with its portrait of Ferrando.

[13] Strongly attracted to each other, the couple accept the 'exquisite pain' 'to pleasure inviting'.

[14] – [16] Fiordiligi, despite a similar sexual attraction to Ferrando, resists him – for the moment – and calls on the absent Guglielmo to forgive her inner desires ('Ah, my love, I pray forgive me').

COMPACT DISC THREE

[1] – [4] The men compare notes: an over-confident Guglielmo hears of Fiordiligi's fidelity, then shows Ferrando Dorabella's locket. Don Alfonso proposes another assault on Fiordiligi's virtue.

A room in the sisters' house

[5] Despina congratulates Dorabella for 'acting as a sane woman should do'; [6] 'young love is unrelenting' admits Dorabella. [7] Fiordiligi curses them both as 'all the world is conspiring to compel me to yield'. Ordering Despina to fetch their officers' spare uniforms, she resolves that she and Dorabella will go disguised to the battlefield to find their true loves. [8] But Ferrando, egged on by Guglielmo and Don Alfonso, makes a supreme and successful last effort to conquer 'fortress' Fiordiligi. 'Oh God, I weaken, do with me as you desire', she tells him.

[9] – [11] Don Alfonso encourages the losers, while they are still under pledge to him, to 'marry' their new loves. He has them repeat the words of his cautionary tale: 'Così fan tutte' ('they all act like this').

A brilliantly lit ball

[12] – [13] The sisters' wedding to their new lovers is richly celebrated. [14] A notary (Despina in another disguise) arrives to conduct the official ceremony, naming the 'Albanians' as Leander and Philander. The girls sign but a drum roll and soldiers' voices interrupt proceedings: Ferrando

and Guglielmo have returned from the war. The 'Albanians' and the notary hide, [15] then Ferrando and Guglielmo appear in uniform. They are puzzled by the girls' reactions – 'silent' and 'bedewed with a tear' – until they discover the notary (Despina immediately reveals it's actually her) and the marriage contract. They rush out for 'vengeance' on their 'hateful rivals', returning only half-disguised to reveal the whole plot and to burlesque their antics with Despina. She is as surprised and horrified as the sisters. Don Alfonso excuses his actions with the claim that 'I desired but to persuade them nothing's perfect here below'. He encourages a general reconciliation: the girls claim their penitence will be 'far more faithful than vows I've broken', while the boys promise 'to the proof no more I'll go'. [16] All praise 'the man who calmly takes life strictly as he finds it'.

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Janice Watson (Fiordiligi) studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and first came to prominence as winner of the Kathleen Ferrier memorial award.

Operatic roles have included Pamina (*The Magic Flute*) with the Paris Opéra;



Vitellia (*La clemenza di Tito*) for the Flanders Opera; Strauss' Daphne, Arabella, Salome and Mozart's Elettra (*Idomeneo*) at the Santa Fe Festival; Daphne, Arabella and Eva (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*) with

the San Francisco Opera; Pamina, Countess Almaviva (*The Marriage of Figaro*) and Arabella at the Bavarian State Opera; Ellen Orford (*Peter Grimes*) at the Vienna State Opera, Netherlands Opera and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; Britten's *Gloriana* at the Aldeburgh Festival; Countess Almaviva and Salome for the Deutsche Staatsoper, Berlin; Micaëla (*Carmen*) at both the Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Metropolitan Opera, and both Countess Almaviva and Liù at the Metropolitan Opera. She has been a regular guest with both English National Opera (most recently as the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier*, and *Madam Butterfly*) and Welsh National Opera (most recently as Strauss' Ariadne). She sang the title role in *Katya Kabanova* both for the Royal Opera and in her debut at La Scala, Milan.

Concert appearances include performances under conductors such as Sir Roger Norrington, André Previn, Michael Tilson-Thomas, Sir Colin Davis, Riccardo Chailly, Frans Brüggen, Sir Neville Marriner and Bernard Haitink.

For Chandos Janice Watson has recorded the title role in *Jenůfa* (as part of the Opera in English series), Poulenc's Gloria, Howells' *Missa Sabrinensis*, and Ellen Orford in the Grammy Award-winning recording of *Peter Grimes*.



Diana Montague (Dorabella) was born in Winchester and studied at the Royal Northern College of Music. Since her debut as Zerlina with Glyndebourne Touring Opera she has appeared at

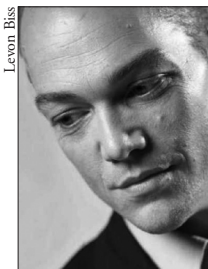
the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels, the Opéra national de Paris-Bastille, Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires and the Bayreuth and Salzburg Festivals.

Her repertory includes the major roles for mezzo-soprano in operas by Mozart, Gluck, Strauss, Rossini, Bellini and Berlioz, and engagements have included *Benvenuto Cellini* with Rome Opera; *Iphigénie en Tauride* in Buenos Aires, Madrid and with Welsh National Opera; *Albert Herring*, Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*) and Andromaca in Rossini's *Ermione* at Glyndebourne; Isolier (*Le Comte Ory*) in Lausanne, Rome and Glyndebourne; Proserpina in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* in Amsterdam; *Ariadne auf Naxos* in Lisbon; Marguerite (*La Damnation de Faust*) in Vienna and Geneva; Minerva (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) in Amsterdam and Sydney; *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Junon in Rameau's *Platée* with The Royal Opera at the Edinburgh Festival and in London, and Octavian (*Der Rosenkavalier*) at English National Opera, in Bilbao and at the Teatro Real in Madrid;

Diana Montague's many recordings include Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, *Norma*, *Iphigénie en Tauride*; for Opera Rara *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*, *Zoraida di Granata* and *Il crociato in Egitto*; and, as part of Chandos' Opera in English series, Cherubino (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Idamante (*Idomeneo*),

Lola (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* (highlights), Sandman (*Hansel and Gretel*), *Faust*, and two recital discs of Great Operatic Arias.

Levon Biss



Winner of the Lieder Prize at the 1997 Cardiff Singer of the World Competition, **Christopher Maltman** (Guglielmo) read biochemistry at Warwick University and studied singing at the Royal Academy of Music.

He recently made his debut at the Metropolitan Opera, New York as Harlekin (*Ariadne auf Naxos*). At the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, he created the role of Sebastian in the world premiere of Thomas Adès' *The Tempest* and has also sung Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Ramiro (*L'Heure espagnole*), Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*), Nardo (*La finta giardiniera*) and Papageno (*The Magic Flute*). His roles at the Glyndebourne Festival include Ned Keene (*Peter Grimes*), Sid (*Albert Herring*), Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Achilla (*Giulio Cesare*) and Papageno. At the Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich, he has sung Tarquinius

(*The Rape of Lucretia*), Guglielmo, Marcello (*La Bohème*) and Albert (*Werther*). An acclaimed Billy Budd, he has sung the role at Welsh National Opera, Teatro Regio in Turin, Seattle and in Munich. Other opera appearances include Don Giovanni at The Sage, Gateshead in a new production directed by Sir Thomas Allen; Count Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*) in Vienna; Papageno in San Francisco; Figaro (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) at the Deutsche Staatsoper, Berlin and in San Diego; Aeneas (*Dido and Aeneas*) in Vienna; Tarquinius at the Aldeburgh Festival and for English National Opera; and at the 2008 Salzburg Festival he sings the title role in *Don Giovanni*.

In concert he has worked with conductors such as Christoph von Dohnányi, John Adams, Sir Roger Norrington, Sir Simon Rattle, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Esa-Pekka Salonen and Kurt Masur. His recital career takes him to the greatest concert halls of the world and he has recorded extensively songs by Warlock, Holst, Somervell, Strauss, Schubert and Schumann's *Dichterliebe* and *Liederkreis*.

An honours graduate and choral scholar from New College, Oxford, **Toby Spence**



(Ferrando) studied at the Opera School of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Toby Spence made his operatic debut as Idamante (*Idomeneo*) for Welsh National Opera, and has since sung the role with Scottish Opera and the Bavarian State Opera. In Munich, he has also sung Ferrando, Ottavio, Telemaco (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*), and Acis (*Acis and Galatea*). For the Monnaie, Brussels he has sung Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) under David Robertson and David (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*) under Antonio Pappano. He has appeared with the San Francisco Opera (in *Alcina*), the Aix-en-Provence Festival (Hyllas in Handel's *Hercules*), the Hamburg Opera (Ferrando), the Teatro Real, Madrid (Tamino and the Male Chorus), the Grand Théâtre du Genève (David) and appeared at the Châtelet under Sir Simon Rattle in the Glyndebourne Festival production of *Fidelio*. He sang the role of the Madwoman in Britten's *Curlew River* at the Edinburgh Festival. He made his debut in Santa Fe as Tamino and as Ferdinand (Ades' *The Tempest*). He has established close links

with English National Opera (most recently in *La Belle Hélène*), the Paris Opéra (making his role debut as Tom Rakewell in *The Rake's Progress*), and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, where he has appeared most recently in *La Cenerentola*.

Toby Spence has appeared in concert with the London Symphony Orchestra, the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic, and the San Francisco Symphony, under conductors such as Sir Simon Rattle, John Eliot Gardiner, Michael Tilson-Thomas, Valéry Gergiev and Antonio Pappano. Recital work has taken him to the Edinburgh Festival and, in London, both LSO St Lukes and the Wigmore Hall.



Lesley Garrett, CBE (Despina), is Britain's most popular soprano, regularly appearing in opera and in concert, on television and CD. She has won both critical acclaim and the affection of many fans and music lovers. As a recording artist, she has twelve solo CDs to her credit. *Soprano in Red* received the *Gramophone*

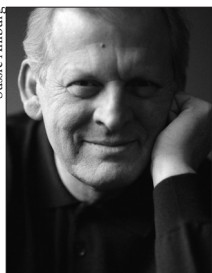
Award for 'Best-selling Classical Artist of the Year'. Her television series *The Lesley Garrett Show* featured guest artists such as Marcello Alvarez, Ian Bostridge, Alison Moyet, Michael Ball, Maxim Vengerov and Joshua Bell, Renée Fleming, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Dmitri Hvorostovsky, Marti Pellow, Michel Legrand and Elaine Paige. She was also the subject of a *South Bank Show* and her music programmes continued on the BBC with *The Singer*.

Lesley Garrett's operatic career included early engagements at the Wexford Festival, Welsh National Opera, Opera North, and Glyndebourne Festival Opera before joining English National Opera in 1984. During her time with English National Opera she starred in many productions and won critical acclaim for her portrayals of both comic and serious roles. She made her Royal Opera debut in their production of *The Merry Widow* in 1997. More recently she returned to the Coliseum for a revival of her acclaimed Rosina in Rossini's *Barber of Seville*. She sang the role The Fox in Rachel Portman's new opera, *The Little Prince*, broadcast on BBC2 in 2004.

Internationally Lesley has performed throughout Europe, the USA, Australia, Russia, Brazil, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan and South Korea. In the 2002 New Year's

Honours List Lesley Garrett was awarded a CBE for Services to Music.

Susie Althburg



Born in Seaham, County Durham, **Sir Thomas Allen** (Alfonso) made his professional debut with Welsh National Opera and is now an established star of the great opera houses of the world.

At the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, where in 2006 he celebrated the thirty-fifth anniversary of his debut with the company, he has sung over forty roles. In 2006, he also celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of his debut at the Metropolitan Opera, New York. He is an acclaimed artist of the Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera and Los Angeles Opera, the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich and La Scala, Milan, as well as both the Salzburg and Glyndebourne Festivals.

He has been particularly acclaimed for his Billy Budd, Pelléas, Eugene Onegin, Ulisse and Beckmesser, as well as the great Mozart roles of Count Almaviva, Don Alfonso, Papageno, Guglielmo and, of course, Don

Giovanni. His recent engagements have included Eisenstein (*Die Fledermaus*), Don Alfonso, Ulisse and Don Giovanni at the Bayerische Staatsoper; Prosdócimo (*Il turco in Italia*) and the title role in *Sweeney Todd* at the Royal Opera House; Eisenstein at the Glyndebourne Festival; Don Alfonso at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Salzburg Easter and Summer Festivals; Forester (*The Cunning Little Vixen*) at the San Francisco Opera; and Beckmesser and Don Alfonso at the Metropolitan Opera in New York.

Equally renowned on the concert platform, he appears in recital in the United Kingdom, throughout Europe, in Australia and America, and has appeared with the world's great orchestras and conductors.

Thomas Allen's first book, *Foreign Parts – A Singer's Journal* was published in 1993 and in 2003 he made a triumphant directing debut with *Albert Herring* at the Royal College of Music. He has since directed successful productions of *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte* at the Sage, Gateshead. In the New Year's Honours of 1989 he was created a Commander of the British Empire and in the 1999 Queen's Birthday Honours he was made a Knight Bachelor.

Geoffrey Mitchell's singing career has encompassed a remarkably wide repertoire from early to contemporary music and has taken him to Scandinavia, Germany, the former Czechoslovakia, Canada and Australasia. Early conducting experience with the BBC led to a wider involvement with his own singers and in turn to the establishment of the **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir**. Early recordings resulted in the Choir's long-term involvement with Opera Rara for which it has made over thirty recordings. The Choir is enjoying a growing reputation with further work from the BBC and international record companies. For Chandos the Geoffrey Mitchell Choir has participated in numerous recordings in the acclaimed Opera in English series sponsored by the Peter Moores Foundation.

Since 1976 there has existed a largely London-based core of players of baroque instruments who have played for bands run autonomously by experts. Confidence and standards had improved greatly in the following ten years and music-making had been transformed.

In 1986 a group of players formed a self-governing orchestra of period instruments – the **Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment**. Their name reflected both the period of much

of the music they play – though boundaries now extend to post-Enlightenment Verdi – and to the ethos of discovery. There was no single conductor. Instead, conductors or (often) directors from violins or keyboards were appointed on a concert-by-concert basis, instantly widening the field to include those who might not otherwise ever face an orchestra of period instruments. The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment was quickly recognised as special, its playing charged with an energy that comes from its entire body, not from one inspirational figurehead.

Twenty-one years later the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment still flourishes. Besides giving concerts it also appears regularly in the pit as the Associate Orchestra at Glyndebourne. It's also a Resident Orchestra at London's Southbank Centre and has a residency in the south-west of England. In celebration of its twenty-one years, six great men who have played pivotal roles in the Orchestras history have been named as Principal Artists (Iván Fischer, Vladimir Jurowski and Sir Simon Rattle) and Emeritus Conductors (Frans Brüggen, Sir Charles Mackerras and Sir Roger Norrington). Two violinists, Alison Bury and Margaret Faultless, share the leader's desk. The

Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment maintains its prominence and continues to thrill audiences with its dynamic, refined, characterful, and extraordinary playing.



Sir Charles Mackerras studied at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and came to England in 1947. He gained a British Council Scholarship to study further at the Academy of Music in Prague. His great interest and love for Janáček commenced in 1947 on hearing *Katya Kabanova* conducted by the great Václav Talich.

As an assistant conductor at Sadler's Wells in 1951 he gave the first performance of *Katya Kabanova* in the English-speaking world. Later he introduced *The Makropulos Case* and *From the House of the Dead* at Sadler's Wells and continued conducting highly successful productions of Janáček's operas as well as more standard repertoire when he became Musical Director of English National Opera (1970–77), and for Welsh National Opera when he became their Musical Director (1987–1992).

He has been a pioneer in the dissemination of the music of Janáček throughout the capitals of Europe and in the USA and Australia. *Jenůfa* has been a particular favourite.

He has had a long association with the Czech Philharmonic and recorded most of Janáček's orchestral works with them as well as *Katya Kabanova* and Dvořák's *Rusalka*. Included in his vast discography is an award-winning cycle of the Janáček operas with the Vienna Philharmonic in the early 1980s. For Chandos he has recorded Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* in the original version, and Kodály's *Psalmus Hungaricus*. As part of the Opera in English series he has recorded *Osud*, *La traviata*, *Werther*, *Julius Caesar*, *Mary Stuart*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Jenůfa*, *The Magic Flute*, *The Bartered Bride*, *The Makropulos Case* and *Hansel and Gretel*.

Sir Charles has also undertaken much research into the music of the eighteenth century, particularly Handel and Mozart. He has recorded a complete series of Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms symphonies, several oratorios by Handel, symphonies by Mahler and Elgar, and a series of operas by Mozart and Gilbert and Sullivan. He is at present Principal Guest Conductor of the Philharmonia Orchestra, Conductor Laureate of the Scottish

Chamber Orchestra, Conductor Emeritus of Welsh National Opera and Principal Guest Conductor Emeritus of the San Francisco Opera.

Sir Charles received a CBE in 1974, was knighted in 1979, honoured with the medal of Merit from the Czech Republic in 1996 and made a Companion of the Order of

Australia in 1997. In 2003 he became a Companion of Honour in the Queen's Birthday Honours. In May 2005 he was presented with the Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal and in November 2005 was the first recipient of the Queen's Medal for Music.

On session: Sir Charles Mackerras with members of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment



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 many millions 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 scholarships, 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.

Così fan tutte

Così fan tutte – “So machen es alle Frauen” – entstand im Laufe des Jahres 1789, wobei nach einer eher gemächlichen Konzeptionsphase die Komposition nach dem bereits vorliegenden Libretto des Hauspoeten der Wiener Hofoper Abbé Lorenzo da Ponte dann sehr zügig erfolgte. Mit da Ponte hatte Mozart auch an der *Hochzeit des Figaro* und *Don Giovanni* zusammengearbeitet, und die beiden wählten auch die Besetzung der ersten Aufführung gemeinsam aus. Die damalige Geliebte des Librettisten – und da Ponte hatte zahlreiche Geliebte, da er als Geistlicher nicht heiraten durfte – Adriana Ferraresi del Bene übernahm die Rolle der Fiordiligi. Er nannte sie sein “Unglück”, äußerte sich sehr offen über ihren Mangel an vorzeigbaren Attributen, schätzte aber ihre Augen und ihren Mund. Die Rolle des Don Alfonso übernahm Mozarts erster Dr. Bartolo/Antonio und Commendatore/Masetto, die Despina sein erster Cherubino, und den Guglielmo sein erster Figaro. Da Mozart auch für die übrigen Sänger des Ensembles bereits zuvor einmal etwas komponiert hatte, waren ihm alle Stimmen wohlvertraut und er berücksichtigte

ihre Stärken (eine für großen Stimmumfang konzipierte Bravour-Arie mit zwei Tempi für Fiordiligi, “Hab’ Mitleid, o verzeih’ mir”) und derzeitige Schwächen (nur eine ganz kurze Arie für Don Alfonso).

Die neue Oper wurde – mit einer überraschenden Zahl von Streichungen, die vermutlich dazu dienen sollten, die Probezeit zu verkürzen – am 26. Januar 1790 am Wiener Burgtheater uraufgeführt und war (trotz häufiger gegenteiliger Behauptungen) ein beachtlicher Erfolg. Die Premiere war von allen Opernaufführungen der Spielzeit 1789/90 am besten besucht und die überlieferten Tagebucheintragungen und Kritiken fielen positiv aus. Das Werk wurde noch vier weitere Male aufgeführt, bevor einige Wochen später Mozarts unbeständiger Gönner Kaiser Joseph II. starb. Dies war in zweierlei Hinsicht eine Katastrophe; zum einen wurden – gerade, als *Così fan tutte* sich zu etablieren begann – wegen der Hoftrauer für einige Wochen die Theater geschlossen, und zum anderen machte sich der neue Herrscher Leopold II. wenig aus Mozart, aus da Ponte (der entlassen wurde), aus dem von ihnen verpflichteten

Sängerensemble (auch hier gab es einige Entlassungen) oder in der Tat ganz allgemein aus der Gattung der *opera buffa* (der nicht-tragischen Oper). Unter den gegebenen Umständen war es schon eine beachtliche Leistung, dass im Laufe des Sommers noch fünf weitere Aufführungen stattfanden (von denen Mozart zumindest die letzte dirigierte).

Danach führte *Così fan tutte* unter Mozarts reifen Werken allerdings eher eine Art Aschenputtel-Dasein. Die nächste Aufführung in Wien fand erst 1794 statt. Während eines Großteils des 19. Jahrhunderts bewerteten Kritiker und Impresarios – allen voran bekanntermaßen Beethoven – das Libretto als unmoralisch und trivial, und das Werk wurde immer wieder verschlimmbessert oder grundlegend verändert, bevor man es aufführte. Es herrschte verbreitet die Meinung, Mozart habe einen groben Irrtum begangen, als er für seine “göttliche” Musik ein solches Sujet wählte. Diese Auffassung begann sich ab 1897 zu ändern, als eine Reihe von großen Dirigenten (und Komponisten) sich wieder dem zuwandten, was Mozart und da Ponte eigentlich geschrieben hatten – Richard Strauss dirigierte in München eine von Hermann Levi (Wagners erstem *Parsifal*-Dirigenten)

einggerichtete Fassung, Gustav Mahler führte das Werk an dessen ursprünglicher Heimstätte, dem Wiener Opernhaus auf, Sir Thomas Beecham dirigierte es in London und Fritz Busch präsentierte es 1934 in einer Inszenierung von Carl Ebert anlässlich des neu eröffneten Glyndebourne Festivals, woraus sich auch die erste Einspielung der Oper ergab.

Was war es denn nun eigentlich, das man am Text dieser Oper für so schockierend, unmoralisch oder trivial hielt? Da Pontes Dichtung scheint eine seiner “originalsten” Schöpfungen gewesen zu sein, im Gegensatz zu der direkten Übersetzung eines zeitgenössischen Schauspiels (wie es beim *Figaro* der Fall war) oder der umfassenden Bearbeitung eines fremden zeitgenössischen Librettos (*Don Giovanni*) – beides durchaus übliche Vorgehensweisen für Librettisten im 18. Jahrhundert. Tatsächlich basierte das Libretto von *Così fan tutte* (das bezeichnenderweise den Untertitel *La scuola degli amanti*, “Die Schule der Liebenden” trug) großenteils auf einem zu der Zeit weithin bekannten Epos aus dem 16. Jahrhundert – Ariostos *Orlando furioso*. Aus dieser Vorlage bezog da Ponte nicht nur die Namen einzelner Personen und dramatische Inhalte, sondern

auch – in einer Art “Erkennen Sie das Zitat”-Spiel, an dem viele seiner gebildeten Wiener Zuschauer sicherlich mit großem Vergnügen teilnahmen – Entlehnungen oder Adaptationen ganzer Bilder und Formulierungen. Auch seine eigenen Libretti *Il finto cieco* und *Una cosa rara* schlachtete er großzügig aus. Und selbst mit dem zentralen Thema der Liebenden, die mittels Verkleidung ihre gegenseitige Treue prüfen, befand er sich auf wohlvertrautem dramatischem Terrain; Beispiele für dieses Sujet lassen sich bis zum Gott Zeus in der griechischen Mythologie zurückverfolgen, zu Ovids *Metamorphosen* oder auch zu den jüngeren “geprüften” Paaren in Shakespeares *A Midsummer Night's Dream* und Marivaux's *La Dispute* (das Stück entstand 1744 und war in Wien ein großer Erfolg).

Von daher also lag mit diesem Stoff nichts allzu Neues oder Beängstigendes vor. Doch der Hofkomponist Antonio Salieri – der erste Musiker, dem da Ponte sein Libretto anbot – brach seine Komposition bereits mit dem zweiten Trio der Männer im ersten Akt ab mit der Begründung, der Text sei “der musikalischen Umsetzung unwürdig”. (Ein Blick auf die überlieferten Skizzen zeigt, dass Salieri in seiner Vertonung fast gänzlich die prahlerische Ironie der Szene vermissen läßt,

in der die jungen Offiziere ihre Damen Alfonso gegenüber anpreisen). Und Salieri – nicht wirklich Mozarts Nemesis, als die er im Theater und Film des 20. Jahrhunderts gerne dargestellt wird – war schließlich unter da Pontes regelmäßigen künstlerischen Partnern derjenige, dessen große Belesenheit und literarisches savoir-faire ihn den Italiener noch höher schätzen ließ als Mozart dies tat. Eigentlich also müsste doch er vor allen anderen da Pontes klassische Anspielungen am ehesten zu schätzen gewusst haben?

Tatsächlich jedoch scheint eine Situation entstanden zu sein wie die, als in der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts die wackeren Bürger von Venedig (und ihre Zensoren) Verdi zwangen, sein zeitgenössisches Drama über Pariser Mätressen *La traviata* bei der Erstaufführung in Kostümen und Bühnenbildern aus der Zeit von Ludwig XIV. zu präsentieren. Salieri und zahlreiche nachfolgende Darsteller, Förderer und Zuschauer waren brüskiert von dem sehr modernen Umgang mit sexuellen Themen, von der Art der Charakterzeichnung und überhaupt von dem, was man sich auf der Bühne zu tun und zu thematisieren erlaubte. Zunächst waren da die offensichtlichen zeitgenössischen Anspielungen. Despina erhält im ersten Akt eine ganze Arie (“Bei

Männern, bei Soldaten sucht Ihr Moralität?”, um das Militär – und Wien war 1790 voller Militär – mit seiner “Küsse sie und mach’ dich aus dem Staub”-Moral zu persiflieren. Die “albanische” Verkleidung der Männer erinnert an die zu der Zeit stattfindenden Kriege Österreichs gegen „östliche“ Mächte, vor allem gegen die Türkei, die schon immer das Ziel des grobschlächtigen Wiener Theaterhumors war (wie etwas in Mozarts Serrail-Oper). In der Tat entspricht Despinas wiederholte Reaktion auf das erste Auftauchen der verkleideten Liebhaber recht genau den zeitgenössischen Kommentaren in den Volkszeitungen – “Was für Gesichter! Was für Bärte!/Ich frag mich, wer die sind – Walachen oder Türken?”. Überhaupt ist Despina fast ein wandelndes Sprachrohr sowohl für den Mann auf der Straße als auch für Mozarts und da Pontes gesellschaftskritische Beobachtungen. Und sie ist es auch, die im ersten Akt die Idee zu der ärztlichen “Behandlung” der Vergiftung hat, wodurch der Magnet(ismus) von Franz Anton Mesmer direkt auf der Bühne präsentiert wird (Mesmer war ein persönlicher Freund und regelmäßiger Briefpartner von Mozart und dessen Familie). Diese Art von burleskem Theater – fast scheint Mozart hier schon sein “volkstümliches” Musikschauspiel,

die *Zauberflöte*, vorwegzunehmen – mag ein Publikum, das von einem klassischen Komponisten eher eine zurückhaltendere *opera buffa* erwartet haben dürfte, noch tiefer verwirrt haben.

Als nächstes sind die “Anspielungen für Insider” zu nennen. Schon der Haupttitel des Werks ist ein Zitat aus einer früheren Zusammenarbeit von Mozart und da Ponte – “così fan tutte le belle”, “So machen es alle Schönen” stammt aus der *Hochzeit des Figaro* – während die Beschreibung der mitwirkenden Schwestern Fiordiligi und Dorabella als “vornehme Damen aus Ferrara” sowohl auf die Sängerin Adriana Ferraresi anspielt als auch auf die verbreitete Meinung, Frauen aus dieser Stadt seien von zweifelhafter Tugend. Und hat möglicherweise der Umstand, dass es sich um Schwestern handelte, Mozart an sein eigenes Werben um die Weber-Schwester erinnert – zuerst von Aloysia zurückgewiesen, dann von Constanze erhört? Das zunächst Salieri angetragene Libretto wurde in einer ganzen Reihe von Punkten geändert, als Mozart das Projekt übernahm – vermutlich auf seine eigene Anregung hin.

Ein weiterer Faktor ist die recht unverblühte sexuelle Metaphorik. Ursprünglich war der Schauplatz der Oper Triest. Die Verlagerung

nach Neapel ist zweifellos in dem Ruf dieser Stadt als einem südlich-dekadenten goldenen Palast der Sünde und der eruptiven Gegenwart des vulkanischen Vesuvs (der im Bühnenbild zu sehen ist) begründet, damals wie heute eine ganz offensichtliche Metapher der Erregung. Und wenn die vor den Aufmerksamkeiten des verkleideten Ferrando flüchtende Fiordiligi berichtet, sie habe "eine Natter, eine Hydra, einen Basilisken" gesehen, beschreibt sie wohl kaum irgendein mythologisch-orientalisches Gemälde. In der Tat scheint sich das sexuelle Element nicht auf Anspielungen zu beschränken. Die Musik und Metaphorik zum Beispiel von Dorabellas Arie im zweiten Akt "Die Liebe ist ein kleiner Dieb" reflektieren ganz eindeutig die Erregung einer ersten sexuellen Erfahrung.

"Ich versichere Ihnen, dass *Figaro* und *Giovanni* im Vergleich mit *Così* die Werke eines Amateurs sind", schrieb der erfahrene Mozart-Kenner und französische Komponist Reynaldo Hahn. Neben der Wortwahl und dem psychologischen Gehalt von da Pontes Libretto würde auch die ruhige Radikalität von Mozarts Vertonung konservativen Geistern kaum gefallen haben. Zum einen spiegelt diese Vertonung die Textvorlage und die darin ausgedrückten Emotionen mit illustrativen

instrumentalen Details, die man als vorromantisch bezeichnen könnte; zum anderen setzte er einen ungewöhnlich großen Teil der Handlung für Ensemble um – ein weiterer Schritt in Richtung auf die naturalistische durchkomponierte narrative Operndarstellung, die er zuerst im Finale des zweiten Akts des *Figaro* erkundet hatte.

Heute würden wir das, was unsere Vorfahren für unmoralisch hielten und als trivial bezeichneten, eher als überzeugende psychologische Tiefe werten. *Così fan tutte* erscheint uns als ein tiefgründigeres und allgemeingültigeres Drama als selbst *Figaro* oder *Don Giovanni*, da das Werk nicht an einen spezifischen politisch-sozialen Kontext gebunden ist (wie die Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Aristokraten und Dienerschaft in den übrigen da-Ponte-Opern), sondern sich mit fundamentalen menschlichen Belangen beschäftigt. Die Paare in dieser Oper setzen sich nicht nur mit Themen der sexuellen Politik auseinander, sondern mit grundsätzlichen Fragen der Ehrlichkeit sich selbst und anderen gegenüber. Fast haben wir es hier mit einer Art Wiener Psychoanalyse einhundert Jahre vor Freud zu tun. Was ist zum Beispiel Don Alfonsos Motivierung für seine Herausforderung von Ferrando und

Guglielmo? Glauben die jungen Offiziere wirklich ihren Prahlereien über die Mädchen (die sie kaum zu kennen scheinen), oder versuchen sie vielmehr herauszufinden, ob das Gegenteil der Fall ist? Ist ihre Verkleidung absichtlich übertrieben und damit kaum überzeugend?

In den unzähligen Inszenierungen seit *Così fan tutte* in den 1950er Jahren ins Standardrepertoire aufgenommen wurde haben die verschiedenen Interpretationen sich vor allem auf die genaue Motivierung der einzelnen Charaktere konzentriert. Ist Don Alfonso ein herzloser, chauvinistischer Zyniker, darauf aus, Unheil anzurichten, um irgendein ihm selbst zugestoßenes *mal d'amour* zu kompensieren, oder ist er ein Prospero-artiger Erzieher, der die wesentlichen Lebenserfahrungen der Jugend lenken will? Ist Despina eine von Don Alfonsos Geldbeutel gekaufte zynische Verbündete, eine realistische und brutal offenherzige Tutorin der Mädchen in sexuellen Angelegenheiten, oder eine Aufrührerin aus der Arbeiterklasse (wie Figaro und Leporello), die gegen verwöhnte Ansichten der Mittel- und Oberschicht angeht? Und weiß sie überhaupt, dass es sich bei den "Albanern" tatsächlich um Ferrando und Guglielmo handelt, oder ist sie bei

deren Enttarnung ebenso überrascht wie ihre Schützlinge, oder aber schockiert sie eher die Tatsache, dass alle sie zum Narren gehalten haben? All diese Optionen sind wirklich möglich und auch im Spiel darstellbar – selbst innerhalb einer streng wortgetreuen Umsetzung von Text und Musik.

Das Gedankengut der Französischen Revolution, die sich genau in der Zeit vollzog, als *Così fan tutte* uraufgeführt wurde, wirkte sich eindeutig auf die Oper aus, wenn auch in weniger offensichtlicher Weise als auf *Figaro* oder *Don Giovanni*. Einerseits zwar sollten die Reformen des dritten Standes nie wirklich im habsburgischen Reich ankommen. Die Arbeiter blieben Arbeiter (selbst als Napoleon in Wien einmarschierte), und die Despinas dieser Welt – wie geistreich und klug sie auch gewesen sein mögen – wurden weiterhin am Grunde des Haufens ausgenutzt und ausgebeutet. Andererseits treiben die Frauen in diesen Opern die dramatische Handlung wesentlich aktiver voran als es meist in der *opera buffa* der Fall ist, und der in Bezug auf *Così fan tutte* immer wieder geäußerte Vorwurf des Sexismus wird weitgehend abgewehrt durch die liberale Art, mit der Fiordiligi und Dorabella auf ihre neuen Liebhaber zugehen, die in ihrer albanischen Tarnung für solch

vornehme Damen der Mittelklasse doch eher unpassende Partner zu sein scheinen.

Doch wie steht es mit dem Ende? Ist es wirklich möglich, dass nach solchen Verletzungen, solch engem Kontakt mit einem anderen Partner (und dem Partner eines anderen) der Status quo wiederhergestellt werden kann? Hat nicht das eher *buffo* ausgerichtete, das oberflächlichere Paar – Dorabella und Guglielmo – einander ebenso entdeckt wie die poetischeren und nachdenklicheren beiden anderen – Fiordiligi und Ferrando –, die, nebenbei bemerkt, auch die höheren Stimmen haben? Im 18. Jahrhundert und für Mozart und da Ponte war dies einfach kein Problem. Der Ausbruch aus den Konventionen hatte sich innerhalb der klassischen Einheit von Zeit (ein einziger Tag von Sonnenaufgang bis Sonnenuntergang) und Ort (abgesehen von der anfänglichen Szene im Kaffeehaus, wo die Männer ihre Wette abschließen) abgespielt und ist mit dem Ende der Spielhandlung vorbei. Doch Mozart und da Ponte können – passend zu ihrem neuen Realismus, der einhundert Jahre lang die Kommentatoren aufregte und herausforderte – ihr Stück an dieser Stelle noch nicht recht enden lassen. Don Alfonso sagt abschließend: “Ja, ich hab’ Euch hintergangen,

doch mein Betrug hat Euren Freunden die Augen geöffnet, die fortan umso weiser sein und nach meinem Willen handeln werden... umarmt einander und schweigt”. Ferrando und Guglielmo akzeptieren das Versprechen ihrer Liebsten, “Euch ewig zu bewundern”, allerdings nur mit der Einschränkung: “Glauben will ich dir, Geliebte, aber ich werde Dich nicht auf die Probe stellen”. Despina, die sich fragt, ob sie etwa träumt, fühlt sich verwirrt und beschämt und droht eine Art Rache an – “diesmal haben sie mich getäuscht, doch ich werde noch viele andere hinters Licht führen”. Erst danach legen die Schauspieler ihre Rollen ab, um dem Publikum einen abstrakten weisen Rat zu erteilen: “Glücklich ist der Mensch, der alles von der rechten Seite betrachtet und in Stürmen und Anfechtungen sich von der Vernunft leiten lässt”.

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Eine Anmerkung vom Dirigent

Im Jahr 1890 wurde *Così fan tutte* von Studenten des damals gerade sieben Jahre alten Royal College of Music unter dem Titel *School for Lovers* am Londoner Savoy Theatre aufgeführt. Dirigent war der Direktor des RCM, Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, und der

Reverend Marmaduke E. Browne fertigte anlässlich des einhundertsten Jahrestags der Uraufführung der Oper eine neue englische Übersetzung an. Browne war Chorleiter und Organist, und obwohl man es für eines Geistlichen nicht recht würdig erachten mag, sich mit dem Thema Oper zu beschäftigen, sind seine Reime oft ausgesprochen witzig – auch wenn sie gelegentlich recht weit von Da Pontes Original abweichen. Man beachte zum Beispiel die ersten Worte der verliebten Mädchen, als sie verzückt die Bildnisse ihrer Verehrer betrachten:

Fiordiligi:

“This portrait alone is
the face of Adonis.”

Worauf Dorabella erwidert:

“Ah, then it must follow
that this is Apollo.”

(Eine konventionelle deutsche Übersetzung würde in etwa lauten: Fiordiligi: “O sieh doch nur, Schwester,/Ob feinere Lippen,/Ob edlere Züge/Wohl jemals man fand.”)

Dorabella: “Betrachte dies Bildnis!/Die feurigen Augen,/Sie stecken wie Blitze/Die Herzen in Brand.”)

Ein anderes Beispiel ist Guglielmos Schmährede gegen die Frauen. Wo Da Ponte wieder und wieder die Worte “la fate a tanti

e tanti” wiederholt, variiert Browne seine Worte jedes Mal mit großer Erfindungsgabe: “Ladies have such variations, permutations, fluctuations”, “Alas their vacillations, complications”, “the ladies’ retractions, abjurations”, “aberrations, hesitations”, usw. Obwohl diese Zeilen ein Jahrhundert nach Da Pontes Original entstanden, scheint Brownes Fassung doch den Stil eines Pope oder Sheridan aufzugreifen. Brownes eigenwilligster Reim findet sich vielleicht in Don Alfonsos berühmter Zusammenfassung:

“Spite of wisdom, folly, plainness or beauty,
every woman’s the same, Così fan tutte.”
(wobei er “beauty” auf “tutte” anstatt auf “tutti” reimt!)

(Die deutsche Fassung lautet: “Sei’s bei Hässlichen, Schönen, Jungen und Alten:/ Darum stimmt mit uns ein: Così fan tutte!”)

Brownes Übersetzung wurde in Sadler’s Wells noch bis in die 1960er Jahre verwendet, obwohl sich für die meisten bekannten Opern inzwischen die neuen Übersetzungen von E. J. Dent durchgesetzt hatten. Als ich *Così* 1980 in John Cox’ bezaubernder Inszenierung am Londoner Coliseum dirigierte, benutzten wir immer noch Brownes Fassung – mit vielen Revisionen von Cox, der den englischen Text besser an Da Pontes ursprüngliche Bedeutung

und die Deklamation an Mozarts originale Rhythmen annähern wollte. Diese Fassung von Brownes Text wurde auch in der vorliegenden Einspielung verwendet.

Bei der oben erwähnten studentischen Aufführung von 1890 handelte es sich übrigens nicht um die erste Inszenierung in englischer Sprache. Zum ersten Mal erklang *Così fan tutte* in London im Jahre 1811; 1828 wurde das Werk an der Royal English Opera als *Tit for Tat* oder *The Tables Turned!* gegeben. Man fragt sich, wie diese Adaptation von *Così fan tutte* wohl ausgesehen haben mag, zumal die Programmfolge noch ein zweites Stück vorsah – *The Bottle Imp* („Der Flaschengeist“, nach einem bekannten deutschen Märchen).

Bei der Erstaufführung in Wien im Jahre 1790 erlaubte Mozart die Auslassung zahlreicher Passagen; warum er dies tat, ist nicht bekannt, da auch einige ausgezeichnete Stellen gestrichen wurden, etwa das kanonische Quartett zu Beginn des zweiten Finale. Heutige Inszenierungen nehmen gewöhnlich keine solch drastischen Kürzungen vor, zwei Nummern werden jedoch traditionsgemäß ausgelassen – ein Duett für die Männer im ersten Akt und eine dritte Arie für Ferrando, „Ah lo veggio“, wodurch die für die meisten

komischen Opern der Zeit übliche Zahl von zwei Arien pro Sänger beibehalten wird. Ähnlich wurden üblicherweise auch kleinere Kürzungen in dem Duett von Ferrando und Fiordiligi, dem Chor im Finale des zweiten Akts und in vielen Rezitativen vorgenommen. Obwohl heutzutage Einspielungen dazu tendieren, Opern vollständig und ohne jegliche Kürzungen zu präsentieren, habe ich mich dafür entschieden, diese englische Fassung von *Così fan tutte* mit den üblichen Kürzungen aufzunehmen und sie damit eher wie eine Inszenierung auf der Bühne zu behandeln.

Bezüglich des Aufführungsstils dieser Einspielung ist es in der Tat eine große Freude, Mozarts wunderbare Musik mit der Klangfarbe, der Artikulation und der rhythmischen Verve des Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment verbinden zu können. Unsere Sänger machen natürlich ausgiebig von der Vorschlagspraxis Gebrauch – das heißt, sie singen die erste von zwei oder drei Silben eines Wortes einen Ton höher (oder tiefer), als er notiert ist. Diese Technik richtet den Text aus und verleiht seinem Fluss größere Akzentuierung.

Mozarts Sänger in *Così fan tutti* waren sämtlich recht große Berühmtheiten und hätten daher automatisch an den Fermaten ihre eigenen Kadenzen angefügt sowie auch

die Vokallinien der Arien mit gelegentlichen Verzerrungen versehen.

Wir haben das große Glück, dass in der Fürstenbergischen Hofbibliothek in Donaueschingen eine verzierte Fassung von *Così fan tutte* überliefert ist. Einige dieser Ornamente und Kadenzen – vor allem in den Arien von Fiordiligi – wurden bei dieser Einspielung übernommen.

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Unterhaltung

COMPACT DISC ONE

1 Overtüre

Erster Akt

Ein Café

2 – 4 Zwei junge Offiziere, Ferrando und Guglielmo, brüsten sich ihrem älteren Freund Don Alfonso gegenüber der Treue ihrer Geliebten, der Schwestern Fiordiligi und Dorabella. 5 – 6 Don Alfonso will mit ihnen um 100 Zechinen wetten, dass er ihnen noch am selben Tag die Untreue ihrer Freundinnen beweisen wird, da diese genau wie alle anderen seien, nämlich von Natur aus untreu. Die beiden nehmen die Wette an

und versprechen bei ihrer Soldatenehre, Don Alfonsos Instruktionen genau zu befolgen und ihren Liebchen nichts zu verraten.

Ein Garten am Meeresufer

7 – 8 Fiordiligi und Dorabella vertiefen sich seufzend in die Bildnisse ihrer beiden Geliebten, obwohl Fiordiligi zugleich auch eingesteht, sie habe „ein törichtes Verlangen nach einem Abenteuer“. 9 – 11 Don Alfonso erscheint und teilt ihnen mit vorgetäuschten Bedauern mit, ihre Offiziere hätten beide soeben den Befehl zum aktiven Dienst erhalten und müssten noch am selben Tage aufbrechen. 12 – 13 Er gestattet ihnen einen kurzen Abschied und lacht über den übertriebenen Kummer der Mädchen, während er die Männer daran erinnert, dass das Spiel gerade erst begonnen hat. 14 – 17 Soldaten erscheinen, um Ferrando und Guglielmo zu ihrem Boot zu geleiten; 18 – 19 Don Alfonso und die Mädchen wünschen ihnen eine sichere Reise („Weht leise, ihr Winde“).

Ein hübscher Raum im Hause der Schwestern

20 – 21 Despina, die Kammerzofe der Schwestern, beklagt ihr „schauderhaftes Leben“ als Bedienstete. 22 – 24 Als Dorabella davon spricht, an den Qualen der Liebe

zugrundegehen, rät Despina ihren trauernden Herrinnen, sich zu amüsieren, während ihre Geliebten abwesend sind, und macht sich über ihren Glauben lustig, bei Männern und Soldaten “ein treues Herz” zu finden. Von dem Gehörten aufgebracht stürmen die jungen Damen davon.

[26] Despina ist nicht erfreut, als sie auf ihren alten Bekannten Don Alfonso trifft, doch er erkaufte sich ihre Unterstützung bei dem Versuch, die beiden Mädchen anderen Galanen vorzustellen. [26] Guglielmo und Ferrando erscheinen in Verkleidung (Despina fragt sich, ob sie Türken oder Wallachen seien) und erklären Fiordiligi und Dorabella ihre glühende Liebe. [27] – [30] Um sie zu unterstützen, gibt Don Alfonso vor, sie seien alte Freunde, doch die Schwestern widerstehen allen Schmeicheleien – vor allem Fiordiligi, die standhaft “wie ein Fels” sein will. [31] – [33] Allein mit Don Alfonso, lachen die Männer über ihren offensichtlichen Sieg (“Solch betörende Augen, die unsere Hoffnung bestärken”).

COMPACT DISC TWO

Ein hübscher Garten mit zwei Grasbänken

[1] – [2] Die beiden “Albaner” geben nun vor,

aus verschmähter Liebe Arsen zu schlucken; Don Alfonso und Despina fordern die Mädchen auf, sich der sterbenden Männer “zärtlich anzunehmen”, und gehen auf der Suche nach einem Arzt ab. Gerade als die Mädchen eingestehen, ihre Herzen seien von Mitleid bewegt, [3] trifft der Doktor ein (die verkleidete Despina, die von den Männern erkannt wird, nicht aber von den Mädchen), gibt mit seinen Sprachkünsten an und schlägt eine von “Dr. Mesmer” entwickelte Heilung vor. Der Magnet und ausgiebiger körperlicher Kontakt mit den Mädchen stellen die Gesundheit der Albaner wieder her, aber Fiordiligi und Dorabella wanken immer noch nicht.

Zweiter Akt

Ein Raum im Hause der Schwestern

[4] Die jungen Damen werden von Despina weiterhin bearbeitet und überredet ([5] – [6] “Schon mit fünfzehn muss ein Mädchen weise und erfahren sein”) und beschließen endlich, dass man sich nicht dafür schämen müsse, Ablenkung zu suchen, um die Melancholie zu vertreiben. [7] – [8] Dorabella, Ferrandos Geliebte, beschließt, mit dem “recht dunklen” (Guglielmo) zu flirten, während Fiordiligi sich “dem blonden” (Ferrando) zuwendet.

Im Garten am Meer

[9] – [11] Ihre neuen Galane haben für die jungen Damen eine al-fresco-Serenade arrangiert. Anschließend überlassen Despina und Don Alfonso die vier sich selbst. [12] Guglielmo flirtet mit Dorabella und schenkt ihr ein Medaillon; er ist zugleich erschrocken und fasziniert, als sie es annimmt. Sodann gelingt es ihm, ihr ihr eigenes Medaillon mit dem Bildnis Ferrandos zu entlocken. [13] Die beiden verspüren eine starke gegenseitige Anziehung und akzeptieren “den exquisiten Schmerz, in Liebe zu vergehen”. [14] – [16] Fiordiligi fühlt sich von Ferrando zwar ähnlich stark angezogen, widersteht ihm aber zunächst und fleht den abwesenden Guglielmo an, ihr Verlangen zu verzeihen (“Ach mein Liebster, ich erbitte Vergebung”).

COMPACT DISC THREE

[1] – [4] Die Männer vergleichen ihre Erfolge: Allzu zuversichtlich hört Guglielmo von Fiordiligis Treue, dann zeigt er Ferrando Dorabellas Medaillon. Don Alfonso schlägt einen weiteren Versuch vor, Fiordiligis Tugend zu überwinden.

Ein Raum im Hause der Schwestern

[5] Despina gratuliert Dorabella dazu, sich wie

eine vernünftige Frau verhalten zu haben; [6] “junge Liebe ist unerbittlich”, gesteht Dorabella ein. [7] Fiordiligi schilt sie beide dafür, sich mit der ganzen Welt zusammengetan zu haben, um sie zum Einlenken zu bringen. Sie trägt Despina auf, die Ersatzuniformen der beiden Offiziere zu holen; sie hat beschlossen, gemeinsam mit Dorabella zum Schlachtfeld hinauszugehen und ihre wahren Geliebten zu suchen. [8] Doch Ferrando unternimmt – unterstützt von Guglielmo und Don Alfonso – einen allerletzten, erfolgreichen Versuch, den “Felsen” Fiordiligi zu erobern. “Oh Gott, ich bin besiegt, tu mit mir, wie dir beliebt”, sagt sie zu ihm.

[9] – [11] Don Alfonso ermutigt die Verlierer, solange sie noch in seiner Schuld stehen, ihre neuen Lieben “zu heiraten”. Sodann lässt er sie die Worte seiner Ermahnung wiederholen: “Cosi fan tutte” (so machen es alle).

Ein hell erleuchteter Saal

[12] – [13] Die Hochzeit der Schwestern mit ihren neuen Geliebten wird mit großem Prunk gefeiert. [14] Ein Notar (Despina in einer weiteren Verkleidung) trifft ein, um die offizielle Zeremonie zu leiten, wobei er die “Albaner” als “Leander” und “Philander” anredet. Die Mädchen unterschreiben den

Ehevertrag, doch ein Trommelwirbel und Soldatenstimmen unterbrechen die Zeremonie: Ferrando und Guglielmo sind von der Schlacht zurückgekehrt. Die „Albaner“ und der Notar verstecken sich, ^[15] dann erscheinen Ferrando und Guglielmo in Uniform. Sie sind von der Reaktion der Mädchen irritiert – „schweigsam“ und „von einer Träne betaut“ – bis sie den Notar (Despina, die sofort verrät, wer sie ist) und den Ehevertrag entdecken. Sie stürzen hinaus, um sich an ihren „verhassten Rivalen“ zu rächen, kehren jedoch gleich halbverkleidet zurück, um die ganze Geschichte aufzuklären und mit Despina ihren Spaß zu haben. Diese ist genauso überrascht und erschrocken wie die Schwestern. Don Alfonso entschuldigt sein Handeln mit der Begründung, er habe nur beabsichtigt, sie davon zu überzeugen, dass nichts auf dieser Erde vollkommen sei. Er fordert alle zu einer allgemeinen Versöhnung auf; die Mädchen beteuern, ihre Reue werde viel treuer sein als die Schwüre, die sie gebrochen haben; und die jungen Männer versprechen, diese neuen Schwüre niemals zu testen. ^[16] Alle preisen den Menschen, der mit ruhiger Zuversicht das Leben so nimmt, wie es sich ihm darbietet.

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Übersetzung: Stephanie Wollny

Janice Watson (Fiordiligi) studierte an der Guildhall School of Music and Drama und machte zunächst als Gewinnerin des Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Award auf sich aufmerksam.

Ihre bisherigen Opernrollen umfassen die Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*) an der Pariser Opéra; Vitellia (*La clemenza di Tito*) an der Vlaamse Opera; Strauss' Daphne, Arabella und Salome sowie Mozarts Elettra (*Idomeneo*) auf dem Santa Fe Festival; Daphne, Arabella und Eva (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*) an der Oper von San Francisco; Pamina, Gräfin Almaviva (*Die Hochzeit des Figaro*) und Arabella an der Bayerischen Staatsoper; Ellen Orford (*Peter Grimes*) an der Wiener Staatsoper, der Nederlandse Opera und dem Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; Britten's *Gloriana* auf dem Aldeburgh Festival; Gräfin Almaviva und Salome an der Deutschen Staatsoper Berlin; Micaëla (*Carmen*) an der Lyric Opera Chicago und der Metropolitan Opera; sowie Gräfin Almaviva und Liù an der Metropolitan Opera. Zudem hat sie regelmäßig Gastverpflichtungen an der English National Opera (in jüngerer Zeit als die Marschallin im *Rosenkavalier* und als *Madam Butterfly*) und der Welsh National Opera (zuletzt in der Titelrolle von Strauss' *Ariadne*) wahrgenommen. Die Katya Kabanova sang sie

an der Royal Opera und in ihrem Debüt an der Mailänder Scala.

Auf dem Konzertpodium ist Janice Watson unter solch namhaften Dirigenten wie Sir Roger Norrington, André Previn, Michael Tilson-Thomas, Sir Colin Davis, Riccardo Chailly, Frans Brüggen, Sir Neville Marriner und Bernard Haitink aufgetreten.

Für Chandos hat Janice Watson die Titelrolle in *Jenůfa* (in der Reihe „Opera in English“), Poulencs Gloria, Howells Missa Sabrinensis sowie die Ellen Orford in der mit einem Grammy Award ausgezeichneten Einspielung von *Peter Grimes* aufgenommen.

Diana Montague (Dorabella) wurde in Winchester geboren und studierte am Royal Northern College of Music. Seit ihrem Debüt als Zerlina mit der Glyndebourne Touring Opera ist sie am Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, an der Metropolitan Opera in New York, dem Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brüssel, der Opéra national de Paris-Bastille, dem Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires sowie auf dem Bayreuther und dem Salzburger Festival aufgetreten.

Ihr Repertoire umfaßt die großen Rollen für Mezzosopran in den Opern von Mozart, Gluck, Strauss, Rossini, Bellini und Berlioz;

zu ihren bisherigen Engagements zählen *Benvenuto Cellini* an der Oper von Rom; *Iphigénie en Tauride* in Buenos Aires, Madrid und an der Welsh National Opera; *Albert Herring*, Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*) und Andromaca in Rossinis *Ermione* in Glyndebourne; Isolier (*Le Comte Ory*) in Lausanne, Rom und Glyndebourne; Proserpina in Monteverdis *Orfeo* in Amsterdam; *Ariadne auf Naxos* in Lissabon; Marguerite (*La Damnation de Faust*) in Wien und Genf; Minerva (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) in Amsterdam und Sydney; *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* am Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Junon in Rameaus *Platée* mit der Royal Opera auf dem Edinburgh Festival und in London, sowie Octavian (*Der Rosenkavalier*) an der English National Opera, in Bilbao und am Teatro Real in Madrid.

Zu Diana Montagues zahlreichen Einspielungen zählen Monteverdis *Orfeo*, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, *Norma* und *Iphigénie en Tauride*; für die Chandos-Reihe „Opera Rara“ *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*, *Zoraida di Granata* und *Il crociato in Egitto*, sowie im Rahmen der Chandos-Reihe „Opera in English“ Cherubino (*Die Hochzeit des Figaro*), Idamante (*Idomeneo*), Lola (*Cavalleria*

rusticana), Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* (Highlights), der Sandmann (*Hansel und Gretel*) und *Faust* sowie schließlich zwei Recital-CDs mit Großen Opernarien.

Der Gewinner des Liedpreises bei der Singer of the World Competition in Cardiff des Jahres 1997 **Christopher Maltman** (Guglielmo) studierte Biochemie an der Warwick University und Gesang an der Royal Academy of Music.

Vor kurzem feierte er sein Debüt an der Metropolitan Opera in New York in der Rolle des Harlekin (*Ariadne auf Naxos*). Am Royal Opera House, Covent Garden schuf er die Rolle des Sebastian in der Welturaufführung von Thomas Adès' *The Tempest*; außerdem sang er hier den Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Ramiro (*L'Heure espagnole*), Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*), Nardo (*La finta giardiniera*) und Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*). Seine Auftritte auf dem Glyndebourne Festival umfassen Ned Keene (*Peter Grimes*), Sid (*Albert Herring*), Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Achilla (*Giulio Cesare*) und Papageno. An der Bayerischen Staatsoper München hat er den Tarquinius (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Guglielmo, Marcello (*La Bohème*) und Albert (*Werther*) gesungen. Besonders gefeiert wurde er als Billy Budd, den er an der Welsh National Opera, dem Teatro Regio in

Turin, in Seattle und in München gesungen hat. Weitere Opernauftritte umfassen Don Giovanni an The Sage, Gateshead in einer neuen Inszenierung unter der Leitung von Sir Thomas Allen; Graf Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*) in Wien; Papageno in San Francisco; Figaro (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) an der Deutschen Staatsoper Berlin und in San Diego; Aeneas (*Dido und Aeneas*) in Wien; Tarquinius auf dem Aldeburgh Festival und an der English National Opera; in 2008 auf dem Festival in Salzburg wurde er die Titelrolle in *Don Giovanni* singen.

Im Konzert hat er mit namhaften Dirigenten wie Christoph von Dohnányi, John Adams, Sir Roger Norrington, Sir Simon Rattle, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Esa-Pekka Salonen und Kurt Masur zusammengearbeitet. Er gab zahlreiche Recitals in Großbritannien und im Ausland. Seine CD-Einspielungen umfassen Lieder von Warlock, Holst, Somervell, Strauss und Schubert sowie Schumanns *Dichterliebe* und *Liederkreis*.

Toby Spence (Ferrando) war Choral Scholar am New College in Oxford, wo er sein Studium mit Auszeichnung abschloss, und wurde an der Opera School der Guildhall School of Music and Drama ausgebildet.

Sein Operndebüt feierte Toby Spence an der Welsh National Opera als Idamante (*Idomeneo*); seither hat er die Rolle auch an der Scottish Opera und der Bayerischen Staatsoper gesungen. In München war er zudem als Ferrando, Ottavio, Telemaco (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) und Acis (*Acis und Galatea*) zu hören. An La Monnaie in Brüssel hat er unter David Robertson den Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) und unter Antonio Pappano den David (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*) gesungen. Er ist ferner an der Oper von San Francisco (in *Alcina*) aufgetreten sowie auf dem Festival von Aix-en-Provence (in der Rolle des Hyllas in Händels *Hercules*), an der Hamburger Oper (Ferrando), dem Teatro Real in Madrid (Tamino), dem Grand Théâtre du Genève (David) und in der Glyndebourne-Inszenierung von *Fidelio* unter Sir Simon Rattle am Châtelet. Auf dem Edinburgh Festival sang er die Rolle der Madwoman in Benjamin Britten's *Curlew River*. Sein Debut in Santa Fe feierte er als Tamino und als Ferdinand (Adès' *The Tempest*). Er pflegt enge professionelle Verbindungen mit der English National Opera (*La Belle Hélène*), und der Royal Opera, Covent Garden in *La Cenerentola*.

Im Konzert ist Toby Spence mit dem London Symphony Orchestra, dem Monteverdi Choir

and Orchestra, dem Cleveland Orchestra, den Berliner Philharmonikern und der San Francisco Symphony unter solch namhaften Dirigenten wie Sir Simon Rattle, John Eliot Gardiner, Michael Tilson-Thomas, Valéry Gergiev und Antonio Pappano aufgetreten. Recitals hatte er auf dem Edinburgh Festival sowie in London in LSO St Luke's und der Wigmore Hall.

Lesley Garrett, CBE (Despina), ist die beliebteste Sopranistin Großbritanniens und regelmäßig in der Oper und im Konzert, im Fernsehen und auf CD zu hören. Sie hat sich die Zustimmung der Kritiker und die Zuneigung zahlreicher Fans und Musikliebhaber erworben und bereits zwölf Solo-CDs aufgenommen. Für *Soprano in Red* wurde sie mit dem *Gramophone Award* in der Kategorie "Best-selling Classical Artist of the Year" ausgezeichnet. In ihrer TV-Serie *The Lesley Garrett Show* sind als Gastkünstler bisher Marcello Alvarez, Ian Bostridge, Alison Moyet, Michael Ball, Maxim Vengerov, und Joshua Bell, Renée Fleming, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Dmitri Hvorostovsky, Marti Pellow, Michel Legrand und Elaine Page aufgetreten. Zudem war sie Ehrengast der *South Bank Show*, und ihre Musikprogramme in der BBC mit *The Singer* wurden fortgesetzt.

Zu Lesley Garretts Opernkarriere zählen frühe Engagements auf dem Wexford Festival, an der Welsh National Opera, der Opera North und der Glyndebourne Festival Opera, bevor sie 1984 ins Ensemble der English National Opera aufgenommen wurde. In ihrer Zeit an der English National Opera wirkte sie in zahlreichen Inszenierungen mit und wurde von der Kritik gleichermaßen für ihre Interpretationen ernster und komischer Rollen gefeiert. Ihr Debüt an der Royal Opera hatte sie 1997 in der Inszenierung der *Lustigen Witwe*. In jüngerer Zeit kehrte sie für eine Wiederaufnahme ihrer gerühmten Darbietung der Rosina in Rossinis *Barbier von Sevilla* ans Coliseum zurück. Sie sang die Rolle des Fuchses in Rachel Portmans neuer Oper *The Little Prince*, die im Jahr 2004 auf BBC 2 gesendet wurde.

Auf internationalen Bühnen ist Lesley Garrett in ganz Europa, den USA, Australien, Russland, Brasilien, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan und Südkorea aufgetreten. Im Rahmen der New Year's Honours List des Jahres 2002 wurde sie für ihre Verdienste um die Musik mit einem CBE ausgezeichnet.

Der aus Seaham in der Grafschaft Durham gebürtige **Sir Thomas Allen** (Don Alfonso)

feierte sein professionelles Debüt an der Welsh National Opera und ist heute ein etablierter Star an den großen Opernhäusern der Welt. Am Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, wo er im Jahr 2006 das 35. Jubiläum seines Debüts mit diesem Ensemble beging, hat er mehr als vierzig Rollen gesungen. Im Jahr 2006 feierte er zudem das 25. Jubiläum seines Debüts an der Metropolitan Opera in New York. Er ist ein regelmäßiger und gern gesehener Gast an der Lyric Opera of Chicago, den Opernhäusern von San Francisco und Los Angeles, der Bayerischen Staatsoper in München und der Mailänder Scala sowie bei den Festivals von Glyndebourne und Salzburg.

Besonders gerühmt wurde er für seinen Billy Budd, Pelléas, Eugene Onegin, Ulisse und Beckmesser sowie für die großen Mozart-Rollen Graf Almaviva, Don Alfonso, Papageno, Guglielmo und natürlich Don Giovanni.

Zu seinen Engagements in jüngerer Zeit zählen Eisenstein (*Die Fledermaus*), Don Alfonso, Ulisse und Don Giovanni an der Bayerischen Staatsoper; Prosdócimo (*Il turco in Italia*) und die Titelrolle in *Sweeney Todd* am Royal Opera House; Eisenstein auf dem Glyndebourne Festival; Don Alfonso an der Lyric Opera of Chicago sowie auf dem Oster- und dem Sommerfestival in Salzburg;

Forester (*The Cunning Little Vixen*) an der San Francisco Opera und schließlich Beckmesser und Don Alfonso an der Metropolitan Opera in New York. Am Royal Opera House hat er der Vater (*Hänsel und Gretel*), Faninal (*Der Rosenkavalier*) und Gianni Schicchi gesungen.

Auch auf dem Konzertpodium hat Sir Thomas Allen einen großen Namen; in Recitals war er mit den bedeutenden Orchestern und Dirigenten der Welt in Großbritannien, ganz Europa, Australien und Amerika zu hören.

Thomas Allens erstes Buch, *Foreign Parts – A Singer's Journal*, wurde 1993 veröffentlicht, und 2003 feierte er am Royal College of Music sein Dirigierdebüt mit der überaus erfolgreichen Aufführung von *Albert Herring*. Inzwischen kann er auf ebenso erfolgreiche Produktionen von *Don Giovanni* und *Così fan tutte* an The Sage in Gateshead zurückblicken. Bei den New Year's Honours von 1989 wurde er zum Commander of the British Empire und bei den Queen's Birthday Honours des Jahres 1999 zum Knight Bachelor ernannt.

Geoffrey Mitchells Gesangskarriere hat ihm ein bemerkenswert breitgefächertes Repertoire von der alten bis zur neuen Musik beschert und ihn nach Skandinavien, Deutschland,

in die ehemalige Tschechoslowakei, nach Kanada und Australasien geführt. Nachdem er bei der BBC erste Dirigiererfahrungen gesammelt hatte, begann er mit eigenen Sängern zu arbeiten und gründete den **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir**. Aus ersten Aufnahmen entwickelte sich eine langfristige Zusammenarbeit des Chors mit Opera Rara, für die er über dreißig Tonträger aufgenommen hat. Der Chor genießt wachsendes Ansehen und ist bei der BBC und internationalen Plattenfirmen gefragt. Für Chandos hat der Geoffrey Mitchell Choir an zahlreichen Aufnahmen der hervorragend kritisierten Reihe Opera in English unter der Schirmherrschaft der Peter Moores Foundation teilgenommen.

Seit 1976 gab es eine weitgehend in London lebende Kerngruppe von Barockmusikern, die in verschiedenen unabhängigen, von Spezialisten geleiteten Orchestern spielten. Die folgenden zehn Jahre sahen eine enorme Steigerung des musikalischen Niveaus und der Spielsicherheit dieser Gruppe sowie auch einen fundamentalen Wandel in der Art des Musizierens.

1986 gründete eine Gruppe von Spielern ein selbstverwaltetes Orchester mit

historischen Instrumenten – das **Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment**. Der Name spiegelt zum einen den Zeitraum, innerhalb dessen ein Großteil des dargebotenen Repertoires entstanden ist – obwohl die Grenzen sich heute eher bis zur Musik des deutlich nach der Aufklärung anzusiedelnden Giuseppe Verdi erstrecken –, und zum anderen das Ethos des Entdeckens. Es gab und gibt keinen designierten Dirigenten, stattdessen werden Dirigenten oder (häufig) Leiter vom Violinpult oder Tasteninstrument projektweise engagiert, wobei auch Musiker berücksichtigt werden, an die man im Zusammenhang mit einem auf historischen Instrumenten spielenden Orchester sonst eher nicht denken würde. Die Welt hat schnell erkannt, dass es sich bei dem Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment um ein ganz besonderes Ensemble handelt, dessen Spiel von einer Energie beseelt ist, die aus dem gesamten Klangkörper heraus entsteht und nicht aus einer einzigen inspirierten Galionsfigur.

Einundzwanzig Jahre später ist das Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment immer noch weithin gefragt. Neben zahlreichen Konzertverpflichtungen sitzt es weiterhin regelmäßig im Orchestergraben von Glyndebourne als dessen Associate

Orchestra. Zudem ist es eines der Resident Orchestras im Londoner Southbank Centre; eine weitere feste Konzertreihe hat es im Südwesten Englands. Anlässlich seines einundzwanzigjährigen Bestehens wurden sechs große Männer, die in der Geschichte des Orchesters entscheidende Rollen spielten, zu Prinzipalen (Iván Fischer, Vladimir Jurowski und Sir Simon Rattle) und Emeritus-Dirigenten (Frans Brüggen, Sir Charles Mackerras und Sir Roger Norrington) ernannt. Die beiden Geigerinnen Alison Bury und Margaret Faultless teilen sich das erste Pult. Das Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment behauptet weiterhin seine herausragende Stellung und begeistert seine Zuhörer immer wieder mit seinem dynamischen, ausgefeilten, charakteristischen und zugleich außergewöhnlichen Spiel.

Sir Charles Mackerras studierte am Konservatorium in Sydney und kam 1947 nach England. Von der Kulturorganisation British Council erhielt er ein Stipendium zur Erweiterung seines Studiums an der Musikakademie Prag. In jenem Jahr begann seine Leidenschaft für die Musik Janáčeks, als er *Katja Kabanowa* unter der Leitung des großen Václav Talich hörte.

Als Assistant Conductor am Londoner Opernhaus Sadler's Wells dirigierte er 1951 die erste Aufführung von *Katja Kabanowa* in der englischsprachigen Welt und brachte später auch *Die Sache Makropulos* und *Aus einem Totenhaus* nach Sadler's Wells. Hoherfolgreiche Inszenierungen von Janáčeks Opern sowie vertraute Werke aus dem Standardrepertoire leitete er auch während seiner Zeit als Musikdirektor der English National Opera (1970–77) und der Welsh National Opera (1987–1992). In ganz Europa, den USA und Australien gilt er als Wegbereiter der Musik Janáčeks. *Jenůfa* ist ihm besonders ans Herz gewachsen.

Name verbindet sich seit langem mit der Tschechischen Philharmonie, mit der er die meisten Orchesterwerke Janáčeks, *Katja Kabanowa* und Dvořáks *Rusalka* aufgenommen hat. Seine umfangreiche Diskographie enthält einen preisgekrönten Zyklus von Janáček-Opern mit den Wiener Philharmonikern aus den frühen achtziger Jahren. Für Chandos hat er Janáčeks *Glagolitische Messe* in der Originalfassung, Kodálys *Psalmus Hungaricus* und Dvořáks

Cellokonzert eingespielt. Für die Chandos-Serie "Opera in English" hat er *Osud*, *La traviata*, *Werther*, *Julius Caesar*, *Mary Stuart*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Jenůfa*, *The Magic Flute*, *The Bartered Bride*, *The Makropulos Case* und *Hansel and Gretel* aufgenommen.

Sir Charles hat auch die Musik des 18. Jahrhunderts erforscht, insbesondere Händel und Mozart. Er hat eine Reihe von Mozart-Opern und Gilbert-und-Sullivan-Operetten sowie Gesamtaufnahmen der Sinfonien von Mozart, Beethoven und Brahms, mehrere Oratorien von Händel sowie Sinfonien von Mahler und Elgar vorgelegt. Derzeit ist er Hauptgastdirigent des Philharmonia Orchestra, Conductor Laureate des Scottish Chamber Orchestra sowie Conductor Emeritus der Welsh National Opera und der San Francisco Opera.

Sir Charles wurde 1974 mit dem britischen Verdienstorden CBE ausgezeichnet, 1979 zum Ritter geschlagen, 1996 mit der Ehrenmedaille der Tschechischen Republik gewürdigt und 1997 zum Companion of the Order of Australia ernannt. 2003 erhob ihn Königin Elizabeth II. zum Companion of Honour.

On session: Janice Watson



On session: Diana Montague



“toutes les beautés agissent de cette manière”

Così fan tutte – “toutes les femmes agissent de cette manière” – fut conçu sans trop de précipitation (mais composé à toute vitesse) au cours de l’année 1789 sur un livret préexistant de l’abbé Lorenzo da Ponte, le poète officiel de l’opéra de la cour de Vienne et le collaborateur de Mozart pour *Le nozze di Figaro* et *Don Giovanni*. La distribution fut choisie par les créateurs de l’ouvrage. La maîtresse du moment du librettiste (et comme prêtre n’ayant pas le droit de se marier, da Ponte en eut beaucoup) Adriana Ferraresi del Bene chanta le rôle de Fiordiligi. Da Ponte l’appelait son “malheur”; il était très franc concernant son manque de séduction évidente, mais il aimait ses yeux et sa bouche. Mozart confia le personnage de Don Alfonso à son premier Bartolo/Antonio et Commandeur/Masetto, Despina à son premier Cherubino et Guglielmo à son premier Figaro. Comme il avait déjà écrit pour les autres chanteurs, Mozart connaissait bien toutes les voix; il tira profit de leurs points forts (une aria à deux tempos mettant en valeur un grand registre vocal (“Par pitié, pardonne-moi” pour Fiordiligi) et tint compte des limitations du

moment (une seule aria des plus brèves pour Don Alfonso).

Le nouvel opéra, avec un nombre surprenant de coupures probablement effectuées pour réduire le temps de répétition, fut créé au Burgtheater de Vienne le 26 janvier 1790 et remporta (malgré les fréquents commentaires affirmant le contraire) un assez beau succès. Le public de cette première fut le plus large de toute la saison 1789/1790, et les commentaires de journaux intimes et les comptes rendus qui nous sont parvenus étaient favorables. L’ouvrage eut quatre représentations supplémentaires avant la mort quelques semaines plus tard de l’empereur Joseph II, l’inconsistant mécène de Mozart. Ce fut une double malchance pour le compositeur: les théâtres restèrent fermés pendant toute la période de deuil de la cour juste au moment où *Così fan tutte* trouvait son rythme, et le nouvel empereur, Léopold II, n’aimait pas beaucoup Mozart, ni da Ponte (qui fut renvoyé), ni la distribution qu’ils avaient choisie (certains des chanteurs furent aussi renvoyés), ni l’*opera buffa* (“opéra non tragique”) en général. Dans de telles circonstances, les cinq représentations

supplémentaires – Mozart dirigeant au moins la dernière – données pendant l’été de cette année-là représentent une très belle réussite.

Mais après cela, *Così fan tutte* devint un genre de Cendrillon parmi les œuvres de la maturité de Mozart. La représentation viennoise suivante dut attendre 1794. Pendant la plus grande partie du dix-neuvième siècle, les commentateurs et les impresarios, avec Beethoven comme premier exemple célèbre, estimaient que le livret était immoral et trivial. Inévitablement, il fut expurgé ou profondément changé pour les représentations. On considérait que Mozart avait commis une grave erreur de jugement en parant un tel sujet de sa “divine” musique. Cette situation changea à partir de 1897 quand plusieurs chefs (et compositeurs) importants revinrent à Mozart et au texte de da Ponte. Richard Strauss dirigea une version préparée par Herman Levi (le chef de la création de *Parsifal*) à Munich, Gustave Mahler à Vienne, Sir Thomas Beecham à Londres et Fritz Busch – en 1934 dans une mise en scène de Carl Ebert dans le cadre du nouveau Festival de Glyndebourne qui mena au tout premier enregistrement de l’opéra.

Qu’est-ce qui était donc considéré si choquant, immoral ou trivial dans le texte de l’opéra? Le poème de da Ponte semblait être l’un de ses plus “originaux”, et non pas la

traduction littérale d’une pièce contemporaine (comme ce fut le cas avec *Le nozze di Figaro*) ou la révision importante d’un autre livret contemporain (*Don Giovanni*) qui étaient la spécialité des librettistes du dix-huitième siècle. En fait, le livret de *Così fan tutte* (délibérément sous-titré *La scuola degli amanti*, “L’École des amants”) est largement tributaire de l’épopée du seizième siècle de L’Arioste, *Orlando furioso*, alors bien connue. Da Ponte en tira des noms de personnages et des thèmes dramatiques et – dans un genre de jeu de devinettes que beaucoup de ses spectateurs viennois plus avertis devaient apprécier – des emprunts et adaptations de phrases et d’images entières. Il pilla librement ses propres livrets *Il finto cieco* et *Una cosa rara*. Le thème central des amants testant leur fidélité par le recours au déguisement était également un moyen dramatique ayant fait ses preuves; des exemples remontaient à Zeus dans la mythologie grecque, aux *Métamorphoses* d’Ovide ou plus récemment avec les couples mis à l’épreuve dans *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* de Shakespeare et dans *La Dispute* de Marivaux (1744, et un succès à Vienne).

Il n’y avait donc rien de particulièrement nouveau ou d’effrayant ici. Et pourtant, le compositeur de la cour Antonio Salieri – le

premier musicien à qui da Ponte avait proposé son livret – abandonna la composition dès le deuxième Trio d'hommes à l'Acte I, déclarant que le texte n'était pas digne d'être mis en musique. (Un coup d'œil aux esquisses montre que sa musique manque presque entièrement l'ironie des deux jeunes officiers vantant les mérites de leurs amantes à Don Alfonso.) Et Salieri – pas tant l'ennemi de Mozart que le théâtre et le cinéma du vingtième siècle aimaient imaginer – était aux yeux de da Ponte supérieur à Mozart en raison de sa vaste culture et de son savoir-faire littéraire. Sûrement, lui plus que tout autre aurait dû apprécier les références classiques de da Ponte!

Et pourtant, il semble qu'une situation se soit développée comme celle qui vit les bons citoyens de la Venise du milieu du dix-neuvième siècle (et leurs censeurs) contraindre Verdi à représenter *La traviata*, son drame contemporain des femmes entretenues dans le Paris de l'époque, en costume et décors Louis XIV lors de la création. Salieri, et après lui bon nombre d'interprètes, de promoteurs et de spectateurs, était choqué par l'approche très moderne de *Così fan tutte* concernant le sexe, les personnages et ce qui pouvait être utilisé et discuté sur scène. En premier lieu, il y avait les évidentes références contemporaines.

Dans l'aria de l'Acte I, "Tu cherches la moralité chez les hommes, les soldats", Despina se moque des militaires – dont Vienne était remplie en 1790 – et leur moralité du genre "embrasse-les et quitte-les". Les hommes déguisés en Albanais évoquent les guerres en cours entre l'Autriche et les puissances de l'"Est", en particulier la Turquie, toujours la cible de l'humour cru du théâtre viennois (comme dans *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* de Mozart). En effet, la réaction répétée de Despina devant la première apparition des amants déguisés est typique de ce que l'on pourrait appeler le commentaire du jour d'un tabloïde – "Quels visages! Quelles moustaches! Je me demande ce qu'ils sont – Wallachiens ou Turcs". Despina apparaît presque comme le porte-parole de l'homme de la rue de l'époque et des observations sociales de Mozart et de da Ponte. Et à l'Acte I, son idée du "remède" du docteur contre le poison met littéralement sur scène (avec l'aimant) le magnétisme de Franz Anton Mesmer qui, dans la vie courante était un ami et un correspondant régulier de Mozart et de sa famille. Ce théâtre du burlesque – annonçant presque sa comédie "populaire" *Die Zauberflöte* – déconcerta peut-être encore plus ceux qui attendaient un *opera buffa* plus retenu de la part d'un compositeur "classique".

Viennent ensuite les plaisanteries internes. Le titre principal de l'ouvrage est une citation d'une œuvre précédente de Mozart et da Ponte – "così fan tutte le belle", "toutes les beautés agissent de cette manière", provient de *Le nozze di Figaro* – tandis que la description des sœurs Fiordiligi et Dorabella comme "dames de Ferrare" dans la distribution fait référence à la chanteuse Adriana Ferraresi del Bene et à la croyance alors populaire selon laquelle les dames de cette ville étaient de petite vertu. Le fait qu'elles étaient sœurs serait-il une allusion à la cour que Mozart fit aux demoiselles Weber, rejeté par Aloysia puis accepté par Constanze? Un nombre assez important de modifications furent apportées au livret soumis à Salieri quand le projet devint celui de Mozart, probablement selon sa suggestion.

Puis viennent directement les images sexuelles. À l'origine l'action de l'opéra était située à Trieste. Le déplacement à Naples fut sans aucun doute effectué pour tirer profit de la réputation de cette ville du sud comme étant un palais doré du vice, et de la présence du Vésuve en éruption (visible à l'arrière plan dans le décor), une analogie flagrante de l'excitation sexuelle à cette époque comme de nos jours. Et quand Fiordiligi, fuyant les

avances de Ferrando (déguisé), nous dit qu'elle a vu "un aspic, une hydre, un basilic", elle ne décrit probablement pas quelque peinture mythologique orientale. Le sexe ne semble pas non plus s'arrêter aux allusions grivoises. Par exemple, la musique et l'image de l'aria de Dorabella à l'Acte II "L'amour est un petit voleur", représente sûrement l'excitation et le témoignage de la première expérience de l'amour sexuel de quelqu'un.

Le compositeur français Reynaldo Hahn, un interprète mozartien expérimenté, a écrit que *Le nozze di Figaro* et *Don Giovanni* sont les œuvres d'un amateur comparées à *Così fan tutte*. En plus du contenu verbal et psychologique du livret de da Ponte, le calme radicalisme de la musique de Mozart pouvait à peine plaire aux esprits conservateurs. Outre la manière dont il reflète le texte et les émotions par des détails instrumentaux illustratifs que l'on pourrait qualifier de romantiques, il inséra une grande partie du contenu de l'histoire dans l'écriture des ensembles, un aspect alors presque unique, et qui constitue un autre mouvement vers la narration opératique continue qu'il avait développée dans le Finale de l'Acte II de *Figaro*.

De nos jours, nous découvrons une profondeur psychologique fascinante dans

ce que nos ancêtres considéraient comme immoral et qualifiaient de trivial. *Così fan tutte* peut paraître maintenant un drame plus profond et plus universel que *Le nozze di Figaro* ou *Don Giovanni* car il ne repose pas sur un contexte politique ou social spécifique (comme les querelles entre aristocrates et domestiques des autres opéras de da Ponte), mais sur un contexte humain. Les couples de l'opéra ne sont pas seulement engagés dans des intrigues sexuelles mais également dans la question de l'honnêteté envers eux-mêmes et envers les autres. C'est presque de la psychanalyse à Vienne cent ans avant Freud. Quelle est la motivation du défi lancé par Don Alfonso à Ferrando et Guglielmo? Les deux jeunes officiers croient-ils vraiment leurs vantardises à propos de leurs amantes (qu'ils semblent à peine connaître), ou cherchent-ils en fait si l'opposé est vrai? Leur déguisement est-il délibérément excessif et peu convaincant?

Dans les cent manières différentes de mettre en scène *Così fan tutte* depuis son entrée au répertoire régulier dans les années 1950, les interprétations ont tout particulièrement mis l'accent sur les motivations exactes des personnages. Don Alfonso est-il un cynique sans cœur et sexiste prêt à susciter des troubles pour compenser quelque *mal*

d'amour personnel, ou est-il à la manière d'un Prospero l'éducateur des jeunes gens concernant les expériences fondamentales de l'existence? Despina est-elle une conspiratrice cynique achetée par l'argent de Don Alfonso, une conseillère réaliste sinon d'une franchise brutale auprès des jeunes femmes en matière de sexualité, ou une semeuse de zizanie de la classe prolétaire (comme Figaro et Leporello) ayant des idées choyées de classes moyennes et supérieures? Et sait-elle que les "Albanais" sont en réalité Ferrando et Guglielmo, ou est-elle aussi choquée par leur révélation finale qu'elle le prétend, ou par le fait qu'elle a été copieusement roulée par tout le monde? Toutes ces options sont parfaitement possibles, et jouables – même en se tenant à une lecture strictement littérale du texte et de la musique.

Les idées de la Révolution française, qui se déroulaient au moment même de la création de l'opéra, eurent un effet certain sur *Così fan tutte*, quoique de manière moins manifeste que sur *Le nozze di Figaro* ou *Don Giovanni*. Sur le plan négatif, les réformes du Tiers État ne devaient jamais atteindre l'empire autrichien sous une quelconque forme littérale. Les prolétaires restèrent prolétaires (même quand Napoléon entra dans Vienne) et les Despina de ce monde, aussi intelligentes et spirituelles

fussent-elles, continuèrent à être utilisées et exploitées au plus bas de l'échelle sociale. Mais d'autre part, les femmes de ces opéras conduisent le drame de manière plus active que dans la plupart des opéras *buffa*, et l'accusation de sexisme régulièrement portée contre *Così fan tutte* est quelque peu contredite par la manière sans retenue avec laquelle Fiordiligi et Dorabella viennent embrasser leurs nouveaux amants qui, sous leur déguisement albanais, représentent un incroyable écart de conduite pour des bourgeoises aussi convenables.

Et que peut-on dire de la fin? Est-il vraiment possible de restaurer le statu quo après tant de peine et tant de contact direct avec un autre (ou autres) partenaire? Le couple plus *buffo* et plus superficiel – Dorabella, Guglielmo – ne se sont-ils pas découverts l'un l'autre aussi assurément que le couple plus poétique et plus prévenant (et aux voix plus élevées) Fiordiligi et Ferrando? Pour le dix-huitième siècle, et pour Mozart et da Ponte, cela ne posait absolument aucun problème. L'"écart de conduite" s'est produit selon les unités classiques de temps (un jour de l'aube au crépuscule) et de lieu (*malgré* la scène d'ouverture dans le café où les hommes font leur pari), et se termine simplement à la fin de la pièce. Mais le compositeur et son librettiste, conformément

à leur nouveau réalisme qui déplut et défia les commentateurs pendant cent ans, ne peuvent pas complètement terminer leur pièce de cette manière. Don Alfonso conclut "Je vous ai trompé, mais ma tromperie a détrompé vos amants, qui ainsi seront plus sages et agiront comme je le souhaite... embrassez-vous et ne dites rien de plus". Ferrando et Guglielmo acceptent l'intention de leurs amantes "de vous adorer de plus en plus", mais seulement avec la mise en garde "Je te crois, ma belle, mais je ne te mettrai pas à l'épreuve". Despina, qui se demande si elle ne rêve pas, se sent "confuse" et "honteuse", et menace de se venger – "Ils m'ont peut-être menée en barque mais j'en duperai bien d'autres". Alors seulement les acteurs sortent-ils de leur caractère pour offrir au public un conseil abstrait et éclairé: "Heureux l'homme qui considère toute chose du bon côté et qui par des épreuves et des tribulations prend la raison pour guide".

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Une note du chef d'orchestre

Così fan tutte, sous le titre de *School of Lovers*, fut représenté en 1890 au Savoy Theatre de Londres par des étudiants du Royal College of Music, un établissement créé sept ans plus tôt.

Le directeur du Collège, Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, était à la direction, et une nouvelle traduction anglaise avait été réalisée pour cette exécution du centenaire par le révérend Marmaduke E. Browne. Browne était chef de chœur et organiste, et bien qu'un sujet d'opéra ait pu sembler quelque peu inconvenant pour un ecclésiastique, les rimes de Browne sont souvent extrêmement spirituelles, même si parfois elles s'éloignent considérablement de l'original de Da Ponte. Considérez les premiers mots des jeunes filles amoureuses contemplant avec ravissement les portraits de leurs amants:

"This portrait alone is
The face of Adonis" [Seul ce visage
parfait est le visage d'Adonis]

auquel répond:

"Ah, then it must follow
That this is Apollo." [Ah, alors celui-ci
doit être Apollon]

Ou prenez la diatribe contre les femmes de Guglielmo. À l'endroit où Da Ponte répète les mots "la fate a tanti e tanti" encore et encore, Browne varie habilement à chaque répétition: "Ladies have such variations, permutations, fluctuations", "Alas their vacillations, complications", "the ladies' retractions, abjurations,", "aberrations, hesitations", etc.

Bien qu'écrite environ cent ans après le texte de Da Ponte, la version de Browne semble posséder un parfum proche de Pope ou de Sheridan. Ses rimes les plus bizarres sont peut-être celles du célèbre résumé de Don Alfonso:

"Spite of wisdom, folly, plainness or beauty,
every woman's the same, *Così fan tutte*."
(faisant rimer "beauty" avec "tutte" et non pas avec "tutti"!)

[Malgré sagesse, folie, sans beauté ou avec beauté, toutes les femmes sont les mêmes, *Così fan tutte*.]

La traduction de Browne était encore en usage au Sadler's Wells pendant les années 1960 malgré l'utilisation générale des nouvelles traductions de E.J. Dent de nombreux opéras célèbres. Quand j'ai dirigé *Così fan tutte* au London Coliseum pour la merveilleuse production de John Cox en 1980, nous avons encore utilisé la version de Browne avec plusieurs révisions de John Cox, celles-ci ayant pour but principal de rendre le texte anglais plus proche de ce que voulait dire Da Ponte et les rythmes musicaux plus proches de l'original de Mozart. C'est cette version du texte de Brown que l'on a utilisée dans le présent enregistrement.

En fait, cette production d'étudiants de 1890 n'était pas la première à être donnée

en anglais. *Così fan tutte*, représenté pour la première fois à Londres en 1811, avait été joué au Royal English Opera sous le titre de *Tit for Tat* ou *The Tables Turned* en 1828. On peut se demander à quoi ressemblait cette version altérée et adaptée de *Così fan tutte*, en particulier si l'on songe qu'il y avait une seconde pièce à l'affiche, *The Bottle Imp*! (d'après une légende populaire allemande)!

Lors de la création à Vienne en 1790, Mozart autorisa l'omission de nombreux passages dans la partition, pour quelle raison nul ne le sait, car plusieurs passages véritablement sublimes furent ainsi coupés, notamment le quatuor en forme de canon au début du second finale. De nos jours, ces coupures aussi radicales ne sont généralement pas effectuées, mais traditionnellement, deux numéros sont omis, un duo pour hommes à l'Acte I et la troisième aria de Ferrando, "Ah lo veggio", préservant ainsi le statu quo de deux arias par personnage comme dans la plupart des opéras comiques de cette époque. De la même manière, des brèves coupures sont traditionnellement faites dans le duo entre Ferrando et Fiordiligi, dans le chœur du finale de l'Acte II et dans de nombreux récitatifs. Bien que de nos jours les enregistrements d'opéras tendent à présenter un ouvrage dans

son intégralité, j'ai choisi d'enregistrer cette version anglaise de *Così fan tutte* avec les coupures traditionnelles, ce qui lui confère un caractère plus proche d'une exécution sur scène.

En ce qui concerne le style d'interprétation de cet enregistrement, c'est vraiment un plaisir d'entendre l'Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment prêter son expertise de la couleur tonale, du phrasé et de l'impulsion rythmique à la merveilleuse partition de Mozart. Naturellement, tous nos chanteurs utilisent fréquemment l'*appoggiatura* vocale, cette inflexion dans laquelle la première de deux ou trois syllabes d'un mot est chantée sur une note supérieure (ou inférieure) à celle écrite. Ceci aide à pointer le texte et à lui donner une accentuation d'une plus grande fluidité.

Les chanteurs de Mozart pour *Così fan tutte* étaient tous éminents et exécutaient automatiquement des cadences aux *fermatas* et ajoutaient ici et là des ornements aux lignes vocales dans les arias.

Dans le cas de cet opéra, on a la chance de posséder une version ornementée de la fin du dix-huitième siècle aujourd'hui conservée à la Bibliothèque Fürstenberg de Donaueschingen. Plusieurs de ces ornements et cadences, en

particulier dans les arias de Fiordiligi, ont été utilisées dans le présent enregistrement.

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Synopsis

COMPACT DISC ONE

[1] Ouverture

Acte I

Un café

[2] – [4] Deux jeunes officiers, Ferrando et Guglielmo, vantent à leur vieil ami Don Alfonso la fidélité de leurs amantes, les sœurs Fiordiligi et Dorabella. [5] – [6] Don Alfonso parie 100 zecchini qu’il pourra leur prouver cet après-midi même qu’elles sont comme toutes les autres femmes – d’un tempérament infidèle. Ils acceptent le pari et promettent, sur leur honneur de soldat, d’exécuter tout ce que Don Alfonso leur demandera de faire et de ne rien dire aux deux sœurs.

Un jardin en bord de mer

[7] – [8] Fiordiligi et Dorabella soupirent en contemplant les portraits de leurs bien-aimés, mais Fiordiligi avoue qu’elle a “une frivole envie d’aventure.” [9] – [11] Don Alfonso arrive;

faisant semblant d’être bouleversé, il annonce que leurs prétendants “sont tous les deux appelés au service actif” et qu’ils doivent partir “ce matin”. [12] – [13] Il autorise un bref adieu, et riant de l’angoisse excessive des jeunes femmes, il avertit les deux hommes que le jeu ne fait que commencer. [14] – [17] Des soldats arrivent pour emmener Ferrando et Guglielmo dans un bateau; [18] – [19] Fiordiligi, Dorabella et Don Alfonso leur souhaitent bon voyage, “O vent soupirant doucement”.

Une pièce joliment décorée dans la maison des deux sœurs

[20] – [21] Despina, la femme de chambre de Fiordiligi et Dorabella, se lamente de sa condition de domestique qu’elle qualifie de “vie de chien”. [22] – [24] Quand Dorabella parle d’“expirer dans les chagrins de l’amour”, Despina conseille à ses maîtresses de s’amuser pendant que leurs amants sont absents, et se moque de leur croyance en la “constance des gentilshommes et des soldats”. Les deux sœurs s’enfuient horrifiées par cette idée.

[25] Despina n’est pas contente de voir Don Alfonso, une ancienne connaissance, mais il achète son aide pour présenter des prétendants nouveaux aux deux jeunes femmes.

[26] Guglielmo et Ferrando arrivent déguisés (Despina se demande s’ils sont “Turcs” ou “Slovaques”) et font des déclarations d’amour passionné à Fiordiligi et Dorabella. [27] – [30] Pour renforcer leurs supplications, Don Alfonso prétend qu’ils sont de vieux amis, mais les deux sœurs restent indifférentes aux flatteries, en particulier Fiordiligi qui se tient “telle une forteresse”. [31] – [33] Guglielmo, Ferrando et Don Alfonso rient de leur apparente victoire (“de la part d’yeux si aguichants, notre espoir est assuré”).

COMPACT DISC TWO

Un beau jardin avec deux talus herbeux

[1] – [2] Les “Albanais” prétendant avaler de l’arsenic à cause de leur désespoir de ne pouvoir être aimés par les deux sœurs; Don Alfonso et Despina encouragent Fiordiligi et Dorabella à “soutenir tendrement” les deux hommes en train de mourir – et partent chercher un médecin. Juste au moment où les deux sœurs admettent être prises de “pitié”, [3] le médecin (Despina est déguisée, mais seuls Guglielmo et Ferrando la reconnaissent) arrive, faisant étalage de connaissances linguistiques et proposant un remède inventé par le “Dr Mesmer”. L’aimant et beaucoup de

contact physique avec les deux jeunes femmes redonnent santé aux “Albanais”, mais Fiordiligi et Dorabella ne sont pas encore prêtes à céder.

Acte II

Une pièce dans la maison des deux sœurs

[4] Taquinées de nouveau puis persuadées par Despina, [5] – [6] “une femme à quinze ans doit être sage et connaître le monde”, Fiordiligi et Dorabella décident qu’“il n’y a rien de honteux à chercher une diversion à la mélancolie”. [7] – [8] Dorabella, l’amante de Ferrando, choisit de flirter avec le garçon “plutôt brun”, Guglielmo, et Fiordiligi avec “le blond”, Ferrando.

Dans le jardin en bord de mer

[9] – [11] Les deux nouveaux prétendants ont organisé une sérénade en plein air. Une fois terminée, Despina et Don Alfonso laissent les quatre jeunes gens se débrouiller seuls. [12] Guglielmo flirte avec Dorabella, et lui offre un médaillon qu’elle accepte, provoquant en lui horreur et fascination. Il parvient en suite à enlever le médaillon de Dorabella contenant le portrait de Ferrando. [13] Fortement attirés l’un vers l’autre, le couple accepte “l’exquise douleur de l’invitation au plaisir”. [14] – [16] Fiordiligi, malgré une attirance sexuelle semblable envers Ferrando, lui résiste – pour le moment – et

demande à l'absent Guglielmo de lui pardonner ses désirs intérieurs, "Ah, mon amour, j'implore le pardon".

COMPACT DISC THREE

[1] – [4] Les deux hommes comparent leurs notes: Guglielmo, un peu trop sûr de lui, écoute parler de la fidélité de Fiordiligi, puis montre à Ferrando le médaillon de Dorabella. Don Alfonso propose un nouvel assaut contre la vertu de Fiordiligi.

Une pièce dans la maison des deux sœurs

[5] Despina félicite Dorabella d'"agir comme une femme sensée"; [6] Dorabella reconnaît que "l'amour jeune est implacable". [7] Fiordiligi les maudit toutes les deux pour essayer que "le monde entier conspire à me faire céder". Elle donne l'ordre à Despina d'aller chercher les uniformes de rechange de leurs amants, et décide de se déguiser avec Dorabella pour aller au champ de bataille y chercher leurs vrais amants. [8] Mais Ferrando, poussé par Guglielmo et Don Alfonso, fait un dernier effort pour conquérir Fiordiligi "la forteresse" et parvient à ses fins. Elle lui cède en disant: "Oh, Dieu, je suis vaincue, fais de moi ce que tu veux".

[9] – [11] Don Alfonso encourage les perdants, pendant qu'ils sont encore tenus par leur promesse envers lui, à se "marier" avec leurs nouvelles amantes. Il leur demande de répéter les paroles avec lesquelles il les avait mis en garde: "Così fan tutte".

Dans une salle illuminée

[12] – [13] Le mariage de Fiordiligi et Dorabella avec leurs nouveaux amants est richement célébré. [14] Un notaire (Despina sous un nouveau déguisement) arrive pour conduire la cérémonie officielle; elle lance de nombreuses citations en latin de cuisine et donne aux "Albanais" les noms de Leander et Philander. Les deux sœurs signent quand un roulement de tambour et des voix de soldats interrompent la cérémonie: Ferrando et Guglielmo sont revenus de la guerre. Les "Albanais" et le notaire se cachent, [15] puis Ferrando et Guglielmo apparaissent en uniforme. Ils sont perplexes devant la réaction des deux femmes – "silencieuse" et "teintée d'une larme" – jusqu'au moment où ils découvrent le notaire et le contrat de mariage. Ils sortent précipitamment pour aller se "venger" de leurs "rivaux détestables", puis reviennent à moitié déguisés pour révéler tout le stratagème, et tourner en ridicule leurs pitreries avec Despina.

Elle est aussi surprise et horrifiée que Fiordiligi et Dorabella. Don Alfonso excuse sa manière d'agir en affirmant que "je voulais seulement les persuader que rien n'est parfait ici-bas". Il encourage une réconciliation générale: les sœurs prétendent que leur pénitence sera "beaucoup plus fidèle que les vœux que j'ai rompus", tandis que Guglielmo et Ferrando promettent "de ne plus chercher la preuve". [16] Tous font les louanges de l'homme qui, avec calme, prend strictement la vie telle qu'elle est.

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Traduction: Francis Marchal

Janice Watson (Fiordiligi) a étudié à la Guildhall School of Music and Drama de Londres, et s'est fait remarquer en remportant le *Kathleen Ferrier memorial award*.

À l'opéra, elle a chanté des rôles tels que Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*) à l'Opéra de Paris; Vitellia (*La clemenza di Tito*) à l'Opéra des Flandres; Daphne, Arabella, Salome de Strauss et Elettra (*Idomeneo*) au Festival de Santa Fe; Daphne, Arabella et Eva (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*) à l'Opéra de San Francisco; Pamina, la Comtesse Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*) et Arabella au Bayerische Staatsoper; Ellen Orford (*Peter Grimes*) au Staatsoper de Vienne, à

l'Opéra des Pays-Bas et au Royal Opera de Covent Garden; *Gloriana* de Britten au Festival d'Aldeburgh; la Comtesse Almaviva et Salome au Deutsche Staatsoper de Berlin; Micaëla (*Carmen*) au Lyric Opera de Chicago et au Metropolitan Opera de New York, la Comtesse Almaviva et Liù au Metropolitan Opera. Elle chante régulièrement à l'English National Opera (récemment avec le rôle de la Maréchale dans *Der Rosenkavalier* et *Madama Butterfly*) et au Welsh National Opera (récemment dans *Ariadne* de Strauss). Elle a interprété le rôle titre de *Kat'á Kabanová* au Royal Opera de Covent Garden, et à son début à La Scala de Milan.

Au concert, elle a chanté sous la direction de chefs tels que Sir Roger Norrington, André Previn, Michael Tilson-Thomas, Sir Colin Davis, Riccardo Chailly, Frans Brüggen, Sir Neville Marriner et Bernard Haitink.

Janice Watson a enregistré pour Chandos le rôle titre dans *Jenůfa* (dans la série "Opera in English"), le *Gloria* de Poulenc, la *Missa Sabrinensis* de Howells, et Ellen Orford dans *Peter Grimes*, un enregistrement qui a remporté un *Grammy Award*.

Née Angleterre à Winchester, Diana Montague (Dorabella) a étudié au Royal Northern College

of Music de Manchester. Depuis ses débuts dans le rôle de Zerlina avec le Glyndebourne Touring Opera, elle s'est produite au Royal Opera de Covent Garden, au Metropolitan Opera de New York, au Théâtre de la Monnaie de Bruxelles, à l'Opéra national de Paris-Bastille, au Teatro Colón de Buenos Aires, au Festival de Bayreuth et au Festival de Salzbourg.

Son répertoire inclut les grands rôles de mezzo-soprano dans des opéras de Mozart, Gluck, Strauss, Rossini, Bellini et Berlioz. Parmi ses engagements, on citera *Benvenuto Cellini* à l'Opéra de Rome; *Iphigénie en Tauride* à Buenos Aires, Madrid et au Welsh National Opera; *Albert Herring*, Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*) et Andromaca dans *Ermione* de Rossini à Glyndebourne; Isolier (*Le Comte Ory*) à Lausanne, Rome et Glyndebourne; Proserpina dans *Orfeo* de Monteverdi à Amsterdam; *Ariadne auf Naxos* à Lisbonne; Marguerite (*La Damnation de Faust*) à Vienne et à Genève; Minerva (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) à Amsterdam et à Sydney; *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* au Royal Opera de Covent Garden, Junon dans *Platée* de Rameau avec le Royal Opera au Festival d'Édimbourg et à Londres, Octavian (*Der Rosenkavalier*) à l'English National Opera, à Bilbao et au Teatro Real de Madrid.

La riche discographie de Diana Montague inclut *Orfeo* de Monteverdi, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, *Norma*, *Iphigénie en Tauride*; pour Opera Rara *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*, *Zoraida di Granata* et *Il crociato in Egitto*, et dans la série de Chandos "Opera in English", Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Idamante (*Idomeneo*), Lola (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Octavian dans *Der Rosenkavalier* (extraits), le Marchand de sable (*Hansel and Gretel*), *Faust*, et deux récitals dans la série "Great Operatic Arias".

Lauréat du Lieder Prize au Concours international de chant de Cardiff en 1997, **Christopher Maltman** (Guglielmo) a étudié la biochimie à l'Université de Warwick et le chant à la Royal Academy of Music de Londres.

Il a récemment fait ses débuts au Metropolitan Opera de New York avec Harlekin (*Ariadne auf Naxos*). Au Royal Opera de Covent Garden, il a créé le rôle de Sebastian lors de la création mondiale de *The Tempest* de Thomas Adès, et a également incarné Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Ramiro (*L'Heure espagnole*), Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*), Nardo (*La finta giardiniera*) et Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*). Au Festival de Glyndebourne, il a interprété les rôles de Ned Keene (*Peter Grimes*), Sid (*Albert Herring*), Figaro (*Le nozze*

di Figaro), Achilla (*Giulio Cesare*) et pour la première fois celui de Papageno. Au Bayerische Staatsoper de Munich, il s'est produit dans Tarquinius (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Guglielmo, Marcello (*La Bohème*) et Albert (*Werther*). Très acclamé pour son interprétation de Billy Budd, il a chanté ce rôle au Welsh National Opera, au Teatro Regio de Turin, à Seattle et à Munich. Il a également interprété Don Giovanni à The Sage, Gateshead, dans une nouvelle production dirigée par Sir Thomas Allen; le Comte Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*) à Vienne; Papageno à San Francisco; Figaro (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) au Deutsche Staatsoper de Berlin et à San Diego; Aeneas (*Dido and Aeneas*) à Vienne; Tarquinius au Festival d'Aldeburgh et à l'English National Opera; en 2008 il chantera le rôle titre dans *Don Giovanni* au Festival de Salzbourg.

En concert, Christopher Maltman a travaillé avec des chefs tels que Christoph von Dohnányi, John Adams, Sir Roger Norrington, Sir Simon Rattle, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Esa-Pekka Salonen et Kurt Masur. Il a donné de nombreux récitals en Grande-Bretagne et à l'étranger. Sa discographie inclut des mélodies de Warlock, Holst, Somervell, Strauss, Schubert, et le *Dichterliebe* et le *Liederkreis* de Schumann.

Diplômé du New College d'Oxford où il a été "Choral scholar", **Toby Spence** (Ferrando) a étudié à la Guildhall School of Music and Drama de Londres.

Il a fait ses débuts lyriques avec Idamante (*Idomeneo*) au Welsh National Opera, et a depuis repris ce rôle au Scottish Opera et au Bayerische Staatsoper de Munich où il a également chanté Ferrando, Ottavio, Telemaco (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*), et Acis (*Acis and Galatea*). Au Théâtre de la Monnaie de Bruxelles, il a chanté Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) sous la direction de David Robertson et David (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*) sous la direction d'Antonio Pappano. Il s'est produit à l'Opéra de San Francisco (dans *Alcina*), au Festival d'Aix-en-Provence (Hyllas dans *Hercules* de Haendel), au Staatsoper de Hambourg (Ferrando), au Teatro Real de Madrid (Tamino), au Grand Théâtre de Genève (David) et au Châtelet sous la direction de Sir Simon Rattle dans la production du Festival de Glyndebourne. Il a chanté le rôle de la Folle dans *Curlew River* de Britten au Festival d'Édimbourg. Il a fait ses débuts à Santa Fe dans le rôle de Tamino et dans celui de Ferdinand (*The Tempest* de Thomas Adès). Il a établi des liens étroits avec l'English National Opera (dans *La Belle Hélène*), et

le Royal Opera de Covent Garden, dans *La Cenerentola*.

Toby Spence s'est produit en concert avec le London Symphony Orchestra, le Chœur et l'Orchestre Monteverdi, le Cleveland Orchestra, la Philharmonie de Berlin, le San Francisco Symphony, sous la direction de chefs tels que Sir Simon Rattle, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Michael Tilson-Thomas, Valéry Gergiev et Antonio Pappano. Il a donné des récitals au Festival d'Édimbourg et à Londres à St Luke's et au Wigmore Hall.

Lesley Garrett (Despina) est la soprano la plus populaire de Grande-Bretagne. Se produisant régulièrement à l'opéra, en concert, à la télévision et au disque, elle a reçu les louanges des critiques et a conquis l'affection de nombreux fans et mélomanes. Sa discographie compte douze albums solos. *Soprano in Red* a obtenu le *Gramophone Award* dans la catégorie du "Best-selling Classical Artist of the Year". Sa série télévisée *The Lesley Garrett Show* présente des artistes invités tels que Marcello Alvarez, Ian Bostridge, Alison Moyet, Michael Ball, Maxim Vengerov, Joshua Bell, Renée Fleming, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Dmitri Hvorostovsky, Marti Pellow, Michel Legrand et Elaine Paige. Elle a été également le sujet d'un

South Bank Show de la BBC Television qui a également diffusé ses programmes musicaux *The Singer*.

Lesley Garrett s'est produite au début de sa carrière lyrique au Wexford Festival, au Welsh National Opera, à l'Opera North et au Festival de Glyndebourne. Elle est ensuite devenue membre de l'English National Opera en 1984 où elle a été la vedette de nombreuses productions et s'est attiré les louanges de la critique pour ses interprétations de rôles comiques et sérieux. Elle a fait ses débuts au Royal Opera de Covent Garden dans *Die lustige Witwe* en 1997. Plus récemment, elle est revenue à l'English National Opera pour une reprise de son rôle acclamé de Rosina dans *Il barbiere di Siviglia* de Rossini. Elle a interprété le rôle du Renard dans le nouvel opéra de Rachel Portman, *The Little Prince*, diffusé par la BBC2 Television en 2004.

Lesley Garrett s'est produite à travers toute l'Europe, les États-Unis, l'Australie, la Russie, au Brésil, au Japon, en Malaisie, à Taiwan et en Corée du Sud. Elle a été nommée Commandeur de l'empire britannique (CBE) en 2002 pour sa contribution au monde de la musique.

Né en Angleterre à Seaham dans le comté de Durham, **Sir Thomas Allen** (Alfonso) a fait

ses débuts professionnels au Welsh National Opera et est aujourd'hui l'une des grandes stars des scènes lyriques dans le monde entier. Au Royal Opera de Covent Garden de Londres, où il a célébré en 2006 le trente-cinquième anniversaire de ses débuts avec cette compagnie, il a incarné plus de quarante rôles. En 2006, il a également célébré le vingt-cinquième anniversaire de ses débuts au Metropolitan Opera de New York. C'est un artiste acclamé au Lyric Opera de Chicago, à l'Opéra de San Francisco, à l'Opéra de Los Angeles, au Bayerische Staatsoper de Munich, à La Scala de Milan, ainsi qu'au Festival de Salzbourg et à celui de Glyndebourne.

Thomas Allen est tout particulièrement salué pour ses interprétations de Billy Budd, Pelléas, Eugène Onéguine, Ulysse et Beckmesser, mais aussi pour les grands rôles mozartiens tels que le Comte Almaviva, Don Alfonso, Papageno, Guglielmo et, bien entendu, Don Giovanni. Parmi ses récents engagements, on citera Eisenstein (*Die Fledermaus*), Don Alfonso, Ulysse et Don Giovanni au Bayerische Staatsoper; Prosdicimo (Il turco in Italia) et le rôle titre dans *Sweeney Todd* au Royal Opera de Covent Garden; Eisenstein au Festival de

Glyndebourne; Don Alfonso au Lyric Opera de Chicago, au Festival de Pâques et au Festival estival de Salzbourg; Forester (*Le Petit Renard rusé*) à l'Opéra de San Francisco; Beckmesser et Don Alfonso au Metropolitan Opera de New York. Au Royal Opera de Covent Garden il a chanté les rôles du Père (Hansel und Gretel) et Gianni Schicchi.

Également renommé pour ses prestations en concert, il se produit en récital en Grande-Bretagne, à travers toute l'Europe, en Australie et en Amérique, et a chanté avec les plus grands orchestres et chefs internationaux.

Le premier livre de Thomas Allen, *Foreign Parts – A Singer's Journal* a été publié en 1993 et en 2003 il a fait des débuts de chef de manière triomphale avec *Albert Herring* au Royal College of Music de Londres. Depuis, il a dirigé avec grand succès des productions de *Don Giovanni* et de *Così fan tutte* à The Sage, Gateshead. Nommé Commandeur de l'empire britannique (CBE) en 1989, il a été anobli en 1999 (Knight Bachelor).

Durant sa carrière de chanteur, Geoffrey Mitchell aborda un répertoire remarquablement varié, depuis la musique ancienne jusqu'à la musique contemporaine, se produisant en Scandinavie, en Allemagne,

dans l'ancienne Tchécoslovaquie, au Canada et en Australasie. Après avoir fait ses premières armes de chef d'orchestre avec la BBC, il décida de prendre une part active dans ce domaine avec ses propres chanteurs et fonda le **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir**. Par suite de ses premiers enregistrements l'ensemble travaille depuis longtemps avec Opera Rara pour qui il a réalisé plus de trente enregistrements. Ce Chœur ne cesse d'élargir sa réputation, travaillant avec la BBC et plusieurs maisons de disques internationales. Pour Chandos, le Geoffrey Mitchell Choir a participé à plusieurs enregistrements pour Opera in English, une série de disques très prisés financée par la Peter Moores Foundation.

Il existe depuis 1976 un nombre de musiciens baroques pour la plupart basés à Londres qui jouent dans des ensembles dirigés de manière autonome par des experts. Leur assurance et leur niveau grandirent rapidement au cours des dix années suivantes, et la manière de faire de la musique en fut transformée.

En 1986, un groupe d'instrumentistes fonda un orchestre d'instruments d'époque autonome – l'**Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment**. Ce nom reflétait la période de la plupart des œuvres qu'ils jouaient – le

répertoire s'étend aujourd'hui à Verdi – et l'esprit de découverte. Il n'y avait pas de chef unique. Au lieu de cela, des chefs et des musiciens dirigeant du rang des violons ou d'un instrument à clavier étaient nommés d'un concert à l'autre, élargissant instantanément le champ pour inclure ceux qui autrement n'auraient peut-être jamais face à un orchestre d'instruments d'époque. L'Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment fut rapidement reconnu comme étant spécial, son jeu chargé d'une énergie provenant de tous ses membres, et non pas de l'inspiration d'une personnalité prestigieuse.

Vingt et un ans plus tard, l'Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment continue à prospérer. Outre ses concerts, il se produit régulièrement en sa qualité d'orchestre associé au Festival de Glyndebourne. Il est également orchestre résident au Southbank Centre de Londres et dans le sud-ouest de l'Angleterre. À l'occasion de ses vingt-et-un ans, six grands musiciens qui ont joué un rôle capital dans l'histoire de l'Orchestre ont été nommés artistes principaux (Iván Fischer, Vladimir Jurowski et Sir Simon Rattle) et chefs émérites (Frans Brüggen, Sir Charles Mackerras et Sir Roger Norrington). Alison Bury et Margaret Faultless partagent le

pupitre de premier violon. L'Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment maintient sa position éminente et continue à enthousiasmer le public par son jeu extraordinairement dynamique, subtil et plein de caractère.

Sir Charles Mackerras étudia au Conservatoire de Musique de Sydney et vint en Angleterre en 1947. Il obtint une bourse du British Council pour continuer ses études à l'Académie de Musique de Prague. Son vif intérêt et sa passion pour la musique de Janáček commença en 1947 après avoir entendu l'opéra *Kat'a Kabanová* dirigé par le grand Václav Talich.

C'est en qualité de chef assistant au Sadler's Wells qu'il donna la première de *Kat'a Kabanová* dans un pays de langue anglaise en 1951. Plus tard, il présenta *L'Affaire Makropoulos* et *La Maison des morts* au Sadler's Wells. Il continua à diriger des productions très acclamées d'opéras de Janáček ainsi que des ouvrages du répertoire habituel quand il devint directeur musical de l'English National Opera (1970–1977), et au Welsh National Opera dont il fut directeur musical de 1987 à 1992. Il a été un défenseur de la musique de Janáček dans les capitales européennes, aux USA et en Australie. *Jenůfa* est l'une de ses œuvres préférées.

Il a entretenu une longue collaboration avec la Philharmonie tchèque et a enregistré à la tête de cette formation la plupart des œuvres pour orchestre de Janáček, ainsi que *Kat'a Kabanová* et *Rusalka* de Dvořák. Sa vaste discographie inclut le cycle primé des opéras de Janáček réalisé avec le Wiener Philharmoniker au début des années 1980. Pour Chandos, il a enregistré la version originale de la *Messe Glagolitique* de Janáček, le *Psalmus Hungaricus* de Kodály et le Concerto pour violoncelle de Dvořák. Dans la série Opera in English, il a enregistré *Osud*, *La traviata*, *Werther*, *Julius Caesar*, *Mary Stuart*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Jenůfa*, *The Magic Flute*, *The Bartered Bride*, *The Makropulos Case* et *Hansel and Gretel*.

Charles Mackerras a également fait d'importantes recherches dans le domaine de la musique du dix-huitième siècle, en particulier Haendel et Mozart. Il a enregistré une série consacrée aux opéras de Mozart et à ceux de Gilbert et Sullivan, ainsi que les cycles complets des symphonies de Mozart, Beethoven et Brahms, plusieurs oratorios de Haendel et des symphonies de Mahler et Elgar. Il est actuellement chef principal invité du Philharmonia Orchestra, chef lauréat du Scottish Chamber Orchestra et chef émérite du Welsh National Opera et du San Francisco Opera.



On session: Lesley Garrett

Charles Mackerras fut nommé commandeur de l'empire britannique (CBE) en 1974 et anobli en 1979. Il a reçu la Médaille du Mérite de la République tchèque en 1996 et fait Companion of the Order of Australia en 1997. En 2003, la reine Elizabeth II l'a nommé Companion of Honour.

“così fan tutte le belle”

Così fan tutte fu concepita con relativa calma (ma composta in fretta) durante il 1789 su un libretto esistente dell'abate Lorenzo da Ponte, poeta ufficiale dell'opera di corte di Vienna e collaboratore di Mozart per *Le nozze di Figaro* e *Don Giovanni*. Il cast fu scelto dai suoi creatori. Adriana Ferraresi del Bene, all'epoca amante del librettista (nella sua qualità di ecclesiastico a cui era interdetto il matrimonio, da Ponte ne aveva molte), fu Fiordiligi. Da Ponte l'aveva definita la sua “disgrazia”, era stato molto franco sulla mancanza di ovvie attrattive della donna, ma gli piacevano i suoi occhi e la bocca. Il ruolo di Don Alfonso fu affidato al primo Dottor Bartolo/Antonio e Commendatore/Masetto di Mozart, quello di Despina al primo Cherubino e quello di Guglielmo al primo Figaro. Avendo già composto in precedenza per gli altri cantanti del cast, Mozart conosceva bene tutte le voci con i loro punti di forza (un'ampia aria brillante in due parti “Per pietà, ben mio, perdona” per Fiordiligi) e i loro limiti (arie brevi per Alfonso).

La prima della nuova opera, con un numero sorprendente di tagli probabilmente apportati per snellire le prove, si svolse presso

il Burgtheater di Vienna il 26 gennaio 1790, con discreto successo (nonostante si dica spesso il contrario). La prima richiamò il maggior afflusso di pubblico della stagione 1789/90 e i commenti e le recensioni furono favorevoli. L'opera fu replicata altre quattro volte prima della morte dell'imperatore Giuseppe II, discontinuo benefattore di Mozart, avvenuta qualche settimana dopo. Fu una doppia sfortuna per il compositore: i teatri rimasero chiusi per diverse settimane di lutto proprio mentre *Così fan tutte* si faceva conoscere, e il nuovo imperatore, Leopoldo II, non era amante di Mozart, di da Ponte (che venne licenziato), dei cast da loro scelti (alcuni dei quali vennero anche congedati) né della cosiddetta opera buffa in generale. Date le circostanze, l'allestimento di altre cinque rappresentazioni estive, di cui Mozart diresse almeno l'ultima, fu un gran risultato.

In seguito, tuttavia, *Così fan tutte* finì per essere una cenerentola tra le opere mature di Mozart. A Vienna fu rappresentata nuovamente solo nel 1794. Per gran parte dell'Ottocento, commentatori e impresari, a partire dal clamoroso esempio di Beethoven,

considerarono immorale e triviale il libretto, che fu inevitabilmente espurgato o interamente modificato per le rappresentazioni. Si pensò che Mozart avesse commesso un grave errore di valutazione nella scelta di un soggetto del genere per la sua musica “divina”. Le cose cambiarono dal 1897 in poi, quando una serie di importanti direttori d'orchestra (e compositori) ritornarono alla partitura originale di Mozart e da Ponte. Richard Strauss diresse una versione preparata da Hermann Levi (il primo direttore del *Parsifal* di Wagner) a Monaco; altrettanto fecero Gustav Mahler nella patria originale dell'opera a Vienna, sir Thomas Beecham a Londra e Fritz Busch, con un allestimento del 1934 di Carl Ebert presso la sede da poco inaugurata del Glyndebourne Festival, che portò alla prima registrazione dell'opera.

Ma cosa c'era di tanto sconvolgente, immorale o triviale? La poesia di da Ponte sembrava una delle sue più “originali”, non essendo la diretta traduzione di una commedia contemporanea (come era accaduto con *Le nozze di Figaro*) oppure l'ampia rielaborazione del libretto di un altro contemporaneo (*Don Giovanni*) – entrambe normali ferri del mestiere per un librettista del XVIII secolo. Anzi, il libretto di *Così fan tutte*

(deliberatamente sottotitolato *La scuola degli amanti*), era molto legato a un famoso poema cavalleresco del XVI secolo, l'*Orlando furioso* di Ariosto. Da quest'opera da Ponte ricavò i nomi dei personaggi e i temi drammatici e – in una sorta di gioco di citazioni che sarebbe piaciuto a molti degli spettatori viennesi più sofisticati – prese in prestito o adattò di interesse immagini ed espressioni, utilizzando a piene mani anche brani dei suoi stessi libretti, *Il finto cieco* e *Una cosa rara*. Il terreno drammatico era molto noto, e sfruttava il tema degli amanti che mettono alla prova la loro fedeltà reciproca utilizzando travestimenti; gli esempi del passato si potevano far risalire alle leggende di Zeus nella mitologia greca, alle *Metamorfosi* di Ovidio o alle più recenti opere teatrali di Shakespeare, come il *Sogno di una notte di mezza estate* e *La Disputa* di Marivaux (scritta nel 1744, e rappresentata con successo a Vienna).

Fin qui, nulla di nuovo o sconcertante. Eppure il compositore di corte Antonio Salieri – il primo a cui da Ponte aveva offerto il suo libretto – abbandonò la composizione già al secondo terzetto degli uomini nell'Atto I, dichiarando il testo “indegno dell'invenzione musicale”. (Uno sguardo agli appunti rimasti dimostra come gli fosse completamente

sfuggita l'ironia della vanagloriosa difesa delle fidanzate da parte dei giovani ufficiali di fronte ad Alfonso). E Salieri – che per Mozart non fu poi quella nemesi che il teatro e il cinema del ventesimo secolo ha amato immaginare – era un compositore che collaborava regolarmente con da Ponte, il quale lo stimava anche più di Mozart per le sue vaste letture e il suo *savoir-faire* letterario. Proprio lui, più di tutti gli altri, avrebbe dovuto apprezzare i riferimenti classici di da Ponte.

Eppure sembra che si fosse creata una situazione simile a quella che avrebbe spinto gli onesti veneziani (e i censori) di metà ottocento a obbligare Verdi ad allestire una prima rappresentazione con costumi e scenografie risalenti all'epoca di Luigi XIV per *Traviata*, dramma contemporaneo su una cortigiana parigina. Salieri e molti artisti, promotori e spettatori successivi, rimasero scandalizzati di fronte all'atteggiamento molto moderno di *Così fan tutte* per quanto riguarda il sesso, i personaggi e le convenzioni teatrali ammesse. Per cominciare, davano da pensare gli ovvi riferimenti contemporanei. Nell'Atto I, Despina ha un'intera aria ("In uomini, in soldati, sperare fedeltà?") in cui mette alla berlina i militari, di cui era piena la Vienna del 1790. I travestimenti da "albanesi" dei

due ufficiali ricordano la guerra che al tempo vedeva impegnata l'Austria contro le potenze "orientali", soprattutto la Turchia, sempre bersaglio del rozzo umorismo teatrale viennese (come nel mozartiano *Ratto dal Serraglio*). Anzi, la ripetuta reazione di Despina quando vede per la prima volta gli innamorati travestiti è tipica di certe opinioni popolari del tempo: "Che sembianze! che vestiti! Che figure! che mustacchi! Io non so se son valacchi, o se turchi son costor". Despina assume quasi il ruolo di portavoce ambulante dell'uomo della strada del suo tempo e delle notazioni sociali di Mozart e Da Ponte. E la sua idea della "cura" contro il veleno, quando si traveste da dottore nell'Atto I, evoca il magnetismo di Franz Anton Mesmer il quale, nella vita, fu amico e regolare corrispondente di Mozart e della sua famiglia. Questo teatro parodistico – che preannuncia quasi il piacere con cui Mozart avrebbe lavorato alla sua opera "popolare", *Il flauto magico*, – potrebbe aver confuso ulteriormente coloro che da un compositore "classico" si attendevano un'opera buffa più misurata.

Poi venivano le allusioni interne. Il titolo stesso dell'opera è una citazione da un'opera precedente di Mozart/da Ponte – "così fan tutte le belle", dalle *Nozze di Figaro* – mentre le

due sorelle Fiordiligi e Dorabella sono definite "dame ferraresi", con riferimento alla cantante Adriana Ferraresi del Bene e a una diceria popolare secondo cui le donne di Ferrara erano di facili costumi. E il fatto che le protagoniste siano sorelle potrebbe essere un riferimento alle sorelle Weber, entrambe corteggiate da Mozart, di cui una, Constanze, divenne sua moglie, mentre l'altra, Aloysia, lo respinse? Al libretto offerto a Salieri furono apportate diverse modifiche quando il progetto passò a Mozart, presumibilmente su suggerimento di quest'ultimo.

Infine venivano le immagini sessuali vere e proprie. Originariamente l'opera era ambientata a Trieste, ma fu trasferita a Napoli, sicuramente per la reputazione di lusso e decadenza peccaminosa legata a questa città, con la presenza minacciosa del Vesuvio in eruzione (che si vede nella scenografia), evidente metafora dell'eccitazione sessuale, allora come oggi. E quando Fiordiligi, nel tentativo di sfuggire alle attenzioni di Ferrando (travestito), dice di aver visto "un aspidi, un'idra, un basilisco", probabilmente non descrive un quadro orientale di soggetto mitologico. Né il sesso sembra fermarsi alle allusioni. La musica e le immagini, per esempio l'aria dell'Atto II di Dorabella, "È amore un

ladroncello", descrive senz'altro l'eccitazione che nasce dalla prima esperienza dell'amore sessuale.

"Giuro che *Figaro* e *Giovanni* sono opere da dilettanti rispetto a *Così fan tutte*", disse Reynaldo Hahn, esperto interprete mozartiano e compositore francese. Insieme al contenuto verbale e psicologico del libretto di da Ponte, il tranquillo radicalismo dell'ambientazione musicale di Mozart non avrebbe soddisfatto gli spiriti dei conservatori. Oltre a rispecchiare il testo e le emozioni con dettagli strumentali dimostrativi che potrebbero definirsi preromantici, Mozart assegnò uno spazio quasi inaudito della storia ai concertati, un altro passo verso la narrazione operistica naturalistica senza parlato, di cui era stato pioniere nel finale dell'Atto II di *Figaro*.

Oggi noi scopriamo una profondità psicologica avvincente in ciò che i nostri antenati consideravano immorale e definivano triviale. Ai nostri occhi, *Così fan tutte* può assumere un significato più profondo e universale rispetto alle *Nozze di Figaro* o al *Don Giovanni* perché non è legato a un contesto politico/sociale specifico (come le beghe tra aristocrazia e servitù delle altre opere di da Ponte), ma a quello umano. Le coppie dell'opera non sono solo impegnate

in schermaglie sessuali, ma nell'intera problematica dell'onestà nei confronti di se stessi e degli altri. Si ha quasi un sentore di psicanalisi a Vienna, un secolo prima di Freud. Perché Alfonso spinge Ferrando e Guglielmo alla loro scommessa? Quando esaltano le doti delle due fidanzate (che però sembrano conoscere appena), i due giovani ufficiali sono sinceri o cercano di scoprire se è vero l'opposto? Il loro travestimento è volutamente eccessivo e poco convincente?

Negli innumerevoli allestimenti di *Così fan tutte*, da quando l'opera è entrata nel normale repertorio negli anni Cinquanta, le interpretazioni si sono incentrate in particolare sulle precise motivazioni dei personaggi. Alfonso è un cinico maschilista senza cuore, deciso a suscitare scompiglio per compensare una pena d'amore propria, oppure, come Prospero, è un maestro di vita per i giovani? Despina è una donna cinica e prezzolata al servizio di Alfonso, un'insegnante realistica per quanto brutalmente franca delle ragazze a proposito della sessualità, o una proletaria che rivoluziona (come Figaro e Leporello) gli assunti delle viziate classi medie e alte? Ed è a conoscenza del fatto che gli "albanesi" sono in realtà Ferrando e Guglielmo, o rimane scioccata dalla loro rivelazione finale quanto

le sue pupille oppure dalla consapevolezza di essere stata tratta in inganno da tutti? Tutte queste sono alternative interamente possibili e interpretabili, anche nell'ambito di un'inquadratura strettamente letterale del testo e della musica.

Le idee della Rivoluzione francese, in svolgimento parallelamente alla prima dell'opera, ebbe decise ripercussioni su *Così fan tutte*, per quanto siano meno evidenti rispetto a *Figaro* o *Don Giovanni*. Il risvolto negativo è rappresentato dal fatto che le riforme del Terzo stato non avrebbero mai raggiunto l'impero austriaco. I lavoratori rimasero lavoratori (anche dopo l'ingresso di Napoleone a Vienna) e ogni Despina, per quanto arguta e intelligente, continuò a essere usata e sfruttata. D'altro canto, le donne di queste opere portano avanti lo svolgimento della vicenda più attivamente rispetto a molte opere buffe e l'accusa di sessismo normalmente rivolta a *Così fan tutte* viene confutata dalla maniera liberale con cui Fiordiligi e Dorabella finiscono per accettare i loro nuovi amanti che, nel loro travestimento da albanesi, rappresenterebbero una vera incognita per due raffinate dame.

Ma che dire della conclusione? È davvero possibile che, dopo tanti travagli e un contatto così diretto con il fidanzato della propria

sorella, sia possibile ristabilire lo status quo? La coppia più superficiale, rappresentata da Dorabella e Guglielmo, non si è messa a nudo quanto quella più poetica e riflessiva di Fiordiligi e Ferrando (con le loro voci più acute)? Per il XVIII secolo e per Mozart e da Ponte, questo non era un problema. La deroga alle regole si era verificata nell'ambito delle classiche unità di tempo (un giorno, dall'alba al tramonto) e di luogo (tranne per la scena iniziale nel caffè dove gli uomini concordano la scommessa), e si concludeva semplicemente alla fine della commedia. Ma Mozart e da Ponte, in linea con il loro nuovo realismo che rivoluzionava e sfidava un secolo di commentatori, non possono ammettere che la commedia finisca qui. Alfonso conclude: "V'ingannai, ma fu l'inganno, disinganno ai vostri amanti, che più saggi omai saranno, che faran quel ch'io vorrò... **Abbracciatevi e tacete**". Ferrando e Guglielmo accettano la promessa delle ragazze "adorarti ognor saprò" ma con cautela: "Te lo credo. Gioia bella, ma la prova io far non vo". Despina si chiede se stia sognando, si "confonde" e si "vergogna" e minaccia una sorta di vendetta: "Manco mal, se a me l'han fatta, che a molt'altri anch'io la fo". Solo allora gli attori abbandonano il ruolo per offrire consigli illuminati e astratti al

pubblico: "Fortunato l'uom che prende ogni cosa per buon verso, e tra i casi e le vicende da ragion guidar si fa".

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Un'osservazione del direttore

Nel 1890 si svolse un allestimento di *Così fan tutte* con il titolo di *School for Lovers*, realizzato dagli studenti del Royal College of Music, fondato sette anni prima, presso il teatro Savoy di Londra. La diresse sir Charles Villiers Stanford, direttore del RCM, e per quella rappresentazione, che segnava il centenario dell'opera, fu realizzata una nuova traduzione in inglese. L'autore, il reverendo Marmaduke E. Browne, era maestro di coro e organista. Per quanto la trama dell'opera potesse essere poco adatta per un uomo di chiesa, le rime di Browne si rivelano estremamente argute, anche se spesso si discostano molto dall'originale di Da Ponte. Prendiamo per esempio la prima esclamazione delle fanciulle che contemplano i ritratti dei loro innamorati. L'osservazione di Fiordiligi "Si vede un sembiante/guerriero ed amante" viene tradotta con un'allusione ad Adone, che facilita la rima inglese:

"This portrait alone is
the face of Adonis."

La replica di Dorabella, “Si vede una faccia/che alletta e minaccia”, diventa un’altra citazione classica:

“Ah, then it must follow
that this is Apollo.”

Oppure prendiamo la tirata di Guglielmo contro le donne: mentre Da Ponte ripete più volte “la fate a tanti e tanti”, Browne propone ogni volta ingegnose variazioni: “Ladies have such variations, permutations, fluctuations”, “Alas their vacillations, complications”, “the ladies’ retractions, abjurations”, “aberrations, hesitations” etc. Sebbene realizzata circa un secolo dopo il testo di Da Ponte, la versione di Browne sembra rievocare Pope o Sheridan. Forse il verso più ingegnoso è il famoso ripilogo di Don Alfonso: “Giacchè giovani, vecchie e belle e brutte,/ripetete con me:/così fan tutte!”

“Spite of wisdom, folly, plainness or beauty,
every woman’s the same, Così fan tutte.”
(qui la parola “beauty” viene pronunciata con una “e” finale per far rima con “tutte”)

La traduzione di Browne continuò ad essere utilizzata al teatro di Sadler’s Wells fino negli anni Sessanta, nonostante si fossero diffuse nuove versioni di numerose opere famose redatte da E.J. Dent. Quando io diressi *Così* al London Coliseum nel delizioso allestimento

di John Cox nel 1980, utilizzammo ancora la versione di Browne con molte diverse revisioni di Cox, per lo più per riavvicinare il testo inglese al significato di Da Ponte e i ritmi musicali all’originale di Mozart. In questa registrazione viene utilizzato il testo di Browne.

Per la verità l’allestimento studentesco del 1890 non fu il primo ad essere rappresentato in inglese. *Così fan tutte*, eseguita per la prima volta a Londra nel 1811, fu rappresentata alla Royal English Opera con il titolo *Tit for Tat* or *The Tables Turned!* (un po’ come “Pan per focaccia”, n.d.t.) nel 1828. Chissà com’era quella versione, riveduta e corretta, soprattutto dal momento che il cartellone includeva anche un secondo brano, *The Bottle Imp!* (un titolo ispirato, pare, a una popolare leggenda “tedesca”, nonostante ricordi molto il genio della lampada!)

Alla sua prima rappresentazione a Vienna nel 1790, Mozart accettò l’omissione di numerosi passaggi dalla partitura, per quale motivo non sappiamo, dal momento che furono eliminati alcuni momenti veramente sublimi, per esempio il quartetto a canone verso l’inizio del secondo finale. Negli allestimenti contemporanei non si apportano normalmente tagli tanto drastici ma, in linea con la tradizione, sono stati omessi due

brani: un duetto degli uomini nell’Atto I, e una terza aria per Ferrando, “Ah lo veggio”, mantenendo due arie per personaggio, come nella maggior parte delle opere comiche dell’epoca. Analogamente, come nella tradizione, sono stati apportati piccoli tagli al duetto di Ferrando e Fiordiligi, al coro del finale dell’Atto II e a molti recitativi. Sebbene le registrazioni contemporanee in genere presentino l’opera in versione assolutamente integrale, io ho scelto di registrare questa versione inglese di *Così fan tutte* con i tagli tradizionali, in modo che si avvicini di più a un allestimento teatrale.

Per quanto riguarda lo stile dell’esecuzione nella registrazione, per la meravigliosa partitura di Mozart è stato un vero piacere avere il contributo dell’Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment con la sua padronanza del colore tonale, del fraseggio e dell’impulso ritmico. Naturalmente i nostri cantanti fanno grande uso dell’appoggiatura vocale, eseguendo le prime due o tre sillabe di una parola in note superiori o inferiori congiunte che si appoggiano alla nota reale. Questo ci aiuta a sottolineare il testo ed esaltarlo.

Gli interpreti di *Così fan tutte* all’epoca di Mozart furono tutti nomi prestigiosi e avrebbero automaticamente cantato cadenze

alle fermate e aggiunto di tanto in tanto un abbellimento alle linee vocali nelle arie.

Nel caso di quest’opera, siamo fortunati: esiste ancora una versione con abbellimenti del tardo Settecento conservata presso la biblioteca Fürstenberg di Donaueschingen. Molti abbellimenti e cadenze di questo spartito, particolarmente nelle arie di Fiordiligi, sono stati utilizzati in questa registrazione.

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Argomento

COMPACT DISC ONE

[1] Ouverture

Atto I

Una bottega di caffè

[2] – [4] Ferrando e Guglielmo, due giovani ufficiali, si vantano con l’amico Don Alfonso della fedeltà delle loro fidanzate, le sorelle Fiordiligi e Dorabella. [5] – [6] Don Alfonso si dice certo di poter dimostrare in un giorno che le loro promesse spose sono, come tutte le altre, infedeli per natura, e scommette cento zecchini. I giovani accettano la scommessa e promettono, sul proprio onore di soldati, di obbedire in tutto a Don Alfonso senza dirlo alle innamorate.

Un giardino sulla spiaggia

[7] – [8] Fiordiligi e Dorabella sospirano davanti ai ritratti dei loro uomini, anche se Fiordiligi confessa “volentieri farei la pazzarella”. [9] – [11] Entra Don Alfonso, fingendosi addolorato, e comunica che gli uomini sono stati convocati dal re per la guerra (“al marzial campo ordin regio li chiama”) e devono partire seduta stante. [12] – [13] Concede il tempo per un breve addio, ridendo dell’angoscia delle fanciulle, ma avverte gli uomini che il gioco è appena iniziato. [14] – [17] Arrivano alcuni soldati e portano via Ferrando e Guglielmo in barca; [18] – [19] le fanciulle e Don Alfonso augurano a entrambi buon viaggio (“Soave sia il vento”).

Una stanza elegante nella casa delle sorelle

[20] – [21] Despina, la cameriera delle sorelle, si lamenta della sua “vita maledetta” al loro servizio. [22] – [24] Quando Dorabella dice “viva a seppellirmi andrei”, Despina consiglia alle padrone addolorate di divertirsi mentre gli innamorati sono lontano, prendendosi gioco della loro ingenuità (“in uomini, in soldati, sperare fedeltà?”). Le donne rimangono scandalizzate.

[25] Despina non è contenta di ritrovare una vecchia conoscenza, Don Alfonso, ma

accetta di farsi pagare per presentare due nuovi pretendenti alle fanciulle. [26] Arrivano Guglielmo e Ferrando travestiti (Despina si chiede se siano “Turchi” o “Valacchi”) e dichiarano la propria passione a Fiordiligi e Dorabella. [27] – [30] Per aiutarli, Don Alfonso finge che si tratti di due suoi vecchi amici, ma le sorelle resistono a tutte le lusinghe, soprattutto Fiordiligi che si erge “come scoglio immoto”. [31] – [33] Insieme con Don Alfonso gli uomini ridono della loro apparente vittoria (“Un’aura amorosa del nostro tesoro”).

COMPACT DISC TWO

Un bel giardino con due banchi d'erba

[1] – [2] Gli “Albanesi” adesso fingono di avvelenarsi con l’arsenico per disperazione; Don Alfonso e Despina esortano le fanciulle a dimostrare “pietade” agli uomini morenti – ed escono in cerca di un “dottore”. Non appena le sorelle ammettono di sentirsi mosse a pietà, [3] arriva il medico (si tratta di Despina travestita, riconosciuta dagli uomini, ma non dalle donne), che si vanta di conoscere molte lingue e propone una cura con una “pietra mesmerica”. Il magnete e molti contatti fisici con le ragazze, riescono a guarire gli Albanesi, ma Fiordiligi e Dorabella non sono ancora pronte a cedere.

Atto II

Una camera nella casa delle sorelle

[4] Tormentate e infine persuase da Despina ([5] – [6] “Una donna a quindici anni”), le sorelle decidono che non c’è nulla di cui vergognarsi: “per divertirsi un poco e non morire dalla malinconia non si manca di fé”. [7] – [8] Dorabella, fidanzata di Ferrando, decide di flirtare con “il brunettino” (Guglielmo) e Fiordiligi con “il biondino” (Ferrando).

Nel giardino sulla riva del mare

[9] – [11] I nuovi corteggiatori hanno organizzato una serenata all’aperto per le sorelle. Al termine, Despina e Don Alfonso lasciano sole le due coppie. [12] Guglielmo flirta con Dorabella, le offre un ciondolo e inorridisce quando lei lo accetta. Quindi riesce a toglierle il ritratto di Ferrando. [13] Fortemente attratti l’uno all’altra, i due finiscono per accettare “nuovi diletti” e il “dolce penar”. [14] – [16] Nonostante provi un’attrazione analoga per Ferrando, Fiordiligi gli resiste – temporaneamente – e invoca l’assente Guglielmo di perdonare i suoi desideri reconditi (“Per pietà, ben mio, perdona”).

COMPACT DISC THREE

[1] – [4] Gli uomini si scambiano le impressioni:

il baldanzoso Guglielmo sente parlare della fedeltà di Fiordiligi, poi mostra a Ferrando il ritratto di Dorabella. Don Alfonso propone un secondo assalto alla fedeltà di Fiordiligi.

Una stanza nella casa delle sorelle

[5] Despina si congratula con Dorabella “vedo che siete una donna di garbo; [6] ogni resistenza è stata vana, ammette Dorabella. [7] Fiordiligi le maledice entrambe, insieme a Don Alfonso e al mondo intero e poi ordina a Despina di portare le spade e i vestiti dei fidanzati, per andare, travestita, con Dorabella, fino al campo di battaglia dove si trovano i fidanzati. [8] Ma Ferrando, spinto da Guglielmo e Don Alfonso, fa un altro tentativo, questa volta con successo, di conquistare Fiordiligi. “Crudel, hai vinto, fa’ di me quel che ti par”, dichiara la sua vittima.

[9] – [11] Don Alfonso incoraggia i due sconfitti, mentre sono ancora sotto giuramento, di “sposare” le nuove fidanzate, ripetendo il suo ammonimento: “Così fan tutte”.

Una sala brillantemente illuminata

[12] – [13] Le nozze delle sorelle con i loro nuovi innamorati vengono riccamente celebrate.

[14] Arriva un notaio (Despina sotto un altro travestimento) per svolgere la cerimonia

ufficiale e congiungere, in latino maccheronico, le due donne con gli Albanesi Leander e Philander. Le ragazze firmano, ma un rullo di tamburi e le voci dei soldati interrompono i procedimenti: Ferrando e Guglielmo sono tornati dalla guerra. Gli “Albanesi” e il notaio si nascondono, [15] poi entrano Ferrando e Guglielmo in divisa. Rimangono sorpresi dalle reazioni delle donne, dal loro pallore e dal loro silenzio, finché non scoprono il notaio (Despina si rivela immediatamente) e il contratto di matrimonio e gridano al tradimento, minacciando di far scorrere sangue a fiumi. Si precipitano fuori e ritornano travestiti solo per metà per rivelare l’inganno e per burlarsi delle donne e di Despina. La cameriera è sorpresa e inorridita quanto le sorelle. Don Alfonso scusa le proprie azioni sostenendo che il suo inganno è servito a rendere tutti più saggi e auspica una riconciliazione generale. Le ragazze si pentono e promettono fedeltà (“Colla fede e coll’amore compensar saprò il tuo cuore”), mentre gli uomini sono più esitanti (“la prova far non vo”). [16] Tutti elogiano “l’uomo che prende ogni cosa per buon verso... bella calma troverà”.

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Traduzione: Emanuela Guastella

Janice Watson (Fiordiligi) ha studiato presso la Guildhall School of Music and Drama e si è messa in luce per la prima volta vincendo il premio dedicato alla memopia di Kathleen Ferrier.

I suoi ruoli teatrali hanno compreso Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*) con l’Opéra di Parigi; Vitellia (*La clemenza di Tito*) per la Flanders Opera, Daphne, Arabella, Salome di Strauss ed Elettra di Mozart (*Idomeneo*) al Festival di Santa Fe, Daphne, Arabella ed Eva (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*) con l’Opera di San Francisco Opera, Pamina, la contessa Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*) e Arabella alla Bayerische Staatsoper di Monaco, Ellen Orford (*Peter Grimes*) all’Opera di Vienna, Netherlands Opera e Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, *Gloriana* di Britten all’Aldeburgh Festival, la contessa Almaviva e Salome alla Deutsche Staatsoper di Berlino; Micaëla (*Carmen*) alla Lyric Opera di Chicago e alla Metropolitan Opera, la contessa Almaviva e Liù alla Metropolitan Opera. È ospite regolare della English National Opera (ultimamente nelle vesti della Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* e di *Madam Butterfly*) e della Welsh National Opera (ultimamente nell’*Ariadne* di Strauss). Ha cantato Katá Kabánova per la Royal Opera e per il suo esordio scaligero a Milano.

Le apparizioni in concerto comprendono collaborazioni con direttori del calibro di sir Roger Norrington, André Previn, Michael Tilson-Thomas, sir Colin Davis, Riccardo Chailly, Frans Brüggen, sir Neville Marriner e Bernard Haitink.

Per Chandos Janice Watson ha registrato il ruolo di protagonista in *Jenůfa* (per la serie Opera in English), il Gloria di Poulenc, la *Missa Sabrinensis* di Howells e Ellen Orford nella registrazione di *Peter Grimes* premiata con un Grammy.

Diana Montague (Dorabella) è nata a Winchester e ha studiato presso il Royal Northern College of Music. Dopo il suo esordio nelle vesti di Zerlina con la Glyndebourne Touring Opera, è comparsa alla Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, alla Metropolitan Opera di New York, al Théâtre de la Monnaie di Bruxelles, all’Opéra National de Paris-Bastille, al Teatro Colón di Buenos Aires e ai festival di Bayreuth e Salisburgo.

Il suo repertorio include i principali ruoli per mezzosoprano delle opere di Mozart, Gluck, Strauss, Rossini, Bellini e Berlioz, e i suoi impegni hanno compreso *Benvenuto Cellini* con il Teatro lirico di Roma, *Iphigénie en Tauride* a Buenos Aires, Madrid e con

la Welsh National Opera, *Albert Herring*, Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*) e Andromaca nell’*Ermione* di Rossini a Glyndebourne, Isolier (*Le Comte Ory*) a Losanna, Roma e Glyndebourne, Proserpina nell’*Orfeo* di Monteverdi ad Amsterdam, *Ariadne auf Naxos* a Lisbona, Marguerite (*La Damnation de Faust*) a Vienna e Ginevra, Minerva (*Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria*) ad Amsterdam e a Sydney; *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* alla Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Junon in *Platée* di Rameau con la Royal Opera al Festival di Edimburgo e a Londra e Octavian (*Der Rosenkavalier*) alla English National Opera, a Bilbao e al Teatro Real di Madrid;

La nutrita discografia di Diana Montagne comprende *Orfeo* di Monteverdi, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, *Norma*, *Iphigénie en Tauride*; per Opera Rara *Rosmonda d’Inghilterra*, *Zoraida di Granata* e *Il crociato in Egitto*; per la serie Opera in English di Chandos, Cherubino (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Idamante (*Idomeneo*), Lola (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* (momenti salienti), Sandman (*Hansel and Gretel*), *Faust*, e due dischi solistici della serie Great Operatic Arias.

Vincitore del premio *lieder* al concorso Cardiff Singer of the World del 1997, **Christopher**

Maltman (Guglielmo) ha studiato biochimica presso la Warwick University e canto alla Royal Academy of Music.

Ha esordito di recente alla Metropolitan Opera, New York nel ruolo di Harlekin (*Ariadne auf Naxos*). Alla Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, ha creato il ruolo di Sebastian nella prima mondiale di *The Tempest* di Thomas Adès e ha inoltre cantato Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Ramiro (*L'Heure espagnole*), Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*), Nardo (*La finta giardiniera*) e Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*). I suoi ruoli per il Glyndebourne Festival comprendono Ned Keene (*Peter Grimes*), Sid (*Albert Herring*), Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Achilla (*Giulio Cesare*) e l'esordio nelle vesti di Papageno. (Presso la Bayerische Staatsoper di Monaco ha cantato Tarquinius (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Guglielmo, Marcello (*La Bohème*) e Albert (*Werther*). Apprezzato per l'interpretazione di Billy Budd, ha cantato questo ruolo presso The Sage, Gateshead in un nuovo allestimento diretto da sir Thomas Allen, il conte Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*) a Vienna; Papageno a San Francisco; Figaro (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) alla Deutsche Staatsoper di Berlino e a San Diego;

Aeneas (*Dido and Aeneas*) a Vienna; Tarquinius per l'Aldeburgh Festival e per English National Opera, Laurent (*Therese Raquin*) all'opera di San Diego, e Guglielmo per English National Opera e a Seattle.

In concerto ha collaborato con direttori del calibro di Christoph von Dohnányi, John Adams, sir Roger Norrington, sir Simon Rattle, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, sir John Eliot Gardiner, Esa-Pekka Salonen e Kurt Masur. Ha al suo attivo numerosi recital nel Regno Unito e all'estero. La discografia comprende brani di Warlock, Holst, Somervell, Straus, Schubert e i *Dichterliebe* e *Liederkreis* di Schumann.

Laureato presso il New College di Oxford dove ha conseguito anche una borsa di studio corale, **Toby Spence** (Ferrando) ha studiato presso la Opera School della Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Per il suo esordio in teatro ha indossato i panni di Idamante (*Idomeneo*) per la Welsh National Opera, e ha riproposto questo ruolo alla Scottish Opera e all'Opera nazionale della Baviera. A Monaco ha cantato Ferrando, Ottavio, Telemaco (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) e Aci (*Aci e Galatea*). Per il teatro La Monnaie di Bruxelles ha cantato Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) con David Robertson e

David (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*) con Antonio Pappano. È comparso con l'Opera di San Francisco (*Alcina*), il Festival di Aix-en-Provence (Hyllas in *Hercules* di Handel), l'Opera di Amburgo (Ferrando), il Teatro Real di Madrid (Tamino), il Grand Théâtre du Genève (David) e ha cantato allo Châtelet con sir Simon Rattle nell'allestimento di *Fidelio* del Glyndebourne. Ha interpretato il ruolo della folle (Madwoman) in *Curlew River* di Britten al Festival di Edimburgo e ha esordito a Santa Fe nei ruoli di Tamino e Ferdinand (*The Tempest* di Ades). Ha al suo attivo una stretta collaborazione con la English National Opera (*La Belle Helene*), e la Royal Opera, Covent Garden nella *Cenerentola*.

Toby Spence ha collaborato con la London Symphony Orchestra, il Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra, l'Orchestra di Cleveland, la Filarmonica di Berlino e l'Orchestra Sinfonica di San Francisco e con prestigiosi direttori d'orchestra tra cui sir Simon Rattle, John Eliot Gardiner, Michael Tilson-Thomas, Valéry Gergiev e Antonio Pappano. La sua attività concertistica comprende apparizioni al Festival di Edimburgo e a Londra, a St Luke con la London Symphony Orchestra e presso il Wigmore Hall.

Lesley Garrett, CBE (Despina), è il più noto soprano britannico e compare regolarmente in allestimenti teatrali, in concerto, in televisione e nelle registrazioni. Molto apprezzata dalla critica e da numerosi fan e appassionati di musica. La sua discografia riunisce dodici CD solistici. *Soprano in Red* ha ricevuto un premio *Gramophone* per la categoria "Best-selling Classical Artist of the Year". Nella sua serie televisiva *The Lesley Garrett Show*, il soprano ha accolto ospiti come Marcello Alvarez, Ian Bostridge, Alison Moyet, Michael Ball, Maxim Vengerov e Joshua Bell, Renée Fleming, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Dmitri Hvorostovsky, Marti Pellow, Michel Legrand ed Elaine Paige. È stata protagonista di un servizio della serie *The South Bank Show* e i suoi varietà musicali sono proseguiti alla BBC con *The Singer*.

La carriera operistica di Lesley Garrett ha compreso primi ingaggi presso il Wexford Festival, Welsh National Opera, Opera North e Glyndebourne Festival Opera prima di entrare alla English National Opera in 1984. Durante il periodo di collaborazione con la English National Opera la cantante è stata interprete di molti allestimenti, conquistandosi l'apprezzamento della critica per i suoi ruoli comici e seri. Ha esordito alla Royal Opera

nell'allestimento della *Vedova allegra* del 1997. Ultimamente ha fatto ritorno al Coliseum per riproporre la sua apprezzata Rosina in *The Barber of Se ville* di Rossini. Ha interpretato The Fox nella nuova opera di Rachel Portman intitolata *The Little Prince*, trasmessa dal secondo canale BBC nel 2004

Lesley Garrett si è esibita in tutta Europa, negli USA, in Australia, Russia, Brasile, Giappone, Malaysia, Taiwan e Corea del Sud. È stata insignita di un CBE nel 2002 per il suo contributo alla musica.

Nato a Seaham, nella Contea di Durham, **sir Thomas Allen** (Alfonso) ha debuttato con la Welsh National Opera, riscuotendo enorme successo nei grandi teatri lirici del mondo. Presso la Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, dove nel 2006 ha festeggiato il trentacinquesimo anniversario del debutto con la compagnia, ha interpretato più di quaranta ruoli. Nel 2006 ha festeggiato anche il venticinquesimo anniversario del debutto alla Metropolitan Opera di New York. Apprezzato artista della Lyric Opera di Chicago, San Francisco Opera e Los Angeles Opera, Bayerische Staatsoper di Monaco e La Scala di Milano, ha collaborato anche con i Festival di Salisburgo e Glyndebourne.

È stato apprezzato in modo particolare per Billy Budd, Pelléas, Eugenio Onieghin, Ulisse e Beckmesser, oltre che i grandi ruoli mozartiani: il conte Almaviva, Don Alfonso, Papageno, Guglielmo e, naturalmente, Don Giovanni. I suoi recenti impegni hanno compreso Eisenstein (*Die Fledermaus*), Don Alfonso, Ulisse e Don Giovanni per la Bayerische Staatsoper; Prosdócimo (Il turco in Italia) e il ruolo di protagonista in Sweeney Todd alla Royal Opera House, Eisenstein al Glyndebourne Festival, Don Alfonso alla Lyric Opera di Chicago, il festival di Salisburgo (primavera ed estate), Forester (*La volpe astuta*) alla San Francisco Opera; Beckmesser e Don Alfonso alla Metropolitan Opera di New York. Alla Royal Opera House ha cantato il padre (*Hansel and Gretel*), Faninal (*Der Rosenkavalier*) e Gianni Schicchi.

Molto apprezzato anche nelle sale da concerto, l'artista compare in recital nel Regno Unito, in Europa, Australia e America e ha collaborato con gli organici e i direttori d'orchestra più importanti.

Il primo libro di Thomas Allen, *Foreign Parts – A Singer's Journal* è stato pubblicato nel 1993; il 2003 ha visto un trionfante debutto nella regia con *Albert Herring* presso il Royal College of Music, seguito dalla regia

di allestimenti di successo del *Don Giovanni* e *Così fan tutte* presso The Sage a Gateshead. Nel 1989 Thomas Allen è stato nominato Commander of the British Empire e nel 1999 ha ricevuto l'onorificenza di Knight Bachelor.

La carriera di cantante di Geoffrey Mitchell racchiude un repertorio notevole che spazia dalla musica antica a quella contemporanea e che l'ha portato in Scandinavia, Germania, nella ex Cecoslovacchia, in Canada e Australasia. L'esperienza di direzione degli inizi con la BBC lo ha condotto ad un maggiore coinvolgimento con i suoi stessi cantanti e inoltre alla creazione del **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir**. Le prime registrazioni sono sfociate nel coinvolgimento a lungo termine del Coro con Opera Rara, per la quale ha inciso più di trenta registrazioni. Il Coro gode di una fama sempre maggiore con ulteriore lavoro dalla BBC e da case discografiche internazionali. Per la Chandos il Geoffrey Mitchell Choir ha partecipato a numerose registrazioni nelle applaudite serie di Opera in English con il patrocinio della Peter Moores Foundation.

Nel 1976 alcuni interpreti di strumenti barocchi, basati a Londra, collaboravano con organici diretti da esperti. Con l'aumentare

della loro sicurezza e il miglioramento dei loro livelli, le esecuzioni subirono un cambiamento radicale

Nel 1986 un gruppo di musicisti fondava un complesso autonomo di strumenti d'epoca: **l'Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment**.

Il nome è legato soprattutto al periodo del repertorio musicale, per quanto oggi i confini si siano notevolmente ampliati, oltre che al principio della scoperta. L'organico non ha mai avuto un solo direttore d'orchestra, ma diversi direttori o (spesso) primi violini o tastieristi, nominati ad hoc, in base ai concerti, oppure anche persone che diversamente non avrebbero mai fronteggiato un'orchestra di strumenti d'epoca. L'Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment si è ben presto fatta notare per la sua originalità, con interpretazioni alimentate dall'energia di tutti i componenti, non da un rappresentante particolarmente ispiratore.

A distanza di ventun anni, il successo continua. Oltre alla sua attività concertistica, l'organico compare regolarmente come Associate Orchestra a Glyndebourne. Inoltre ha una residenza presso il Southbank Centre di Londra e una nell'Inghilterra di sud ovest. In occasione del suo ventunesimo anniversario, l'Orchestra ha assegnato a sei personaggi

che hanno svolto ruoli fondamentali nella sua storia la carica di Principal Artist (Iván Fischer, Vladimir Jurowski e sir Simon Rattle) ed Emeritus Conductor (Frans Brüggen, sir Charles Mackerras e sir Roger Norrington). Due violiniste, Alison Bury e Margaret Faultless, condividono il ruolo di primo violino. L'Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment rimane un organico di spicco e continua a entusiasmare il pubblico con le sue interpretazioni dinamiche, raffinate, originali e straordinarie.

Sir Charles Mackerras ha studiato presso il Conservatorio di Sydney e si è trasferito in Inghilterra nel 1947. Ha ottenuto una borsa di studio del British Council per proseguire gli studi presso l'Accademia Musicale di Praga. Nel 1947 nasceva il suo appassionato interesse per Janáček, dopo aver ascoltato la *Katá Kabánova* diretta dal grande Václav Talich.

In qualità di vicedirettore d'orchestra a Sadler's Wells nel 1951 Mackerras proponeva la prima esecuzione di *Katá Kabánova* nel mondo anglofono. Il seguito avrebbe presentato *L'affare Makropoulos* e *Da una casa di morti* a Sadler's Wells; avrebbe poi continuato a dirigere le opere di Janáček in allestimenti di grande successo, oltre a un

repertorio più tradizionale alla sua nomina a Direttore musicale della English National Opera (1970–77) e in seguito della Welsh National Opera (1987–1992). È stato un pioniere della diffusione della musica di Janáček nelle capitali europee, negli USA e in Australia. Una delle sue opere predilette è *Jenůfa*.

Sir Charles Mackerras ha al suo attivo una lunga collaborazione con la Filarmonica ceca, con cui ha registrato la maggior parte delle opere orchestrali di Janáček oltre a *Katá Kabánova* e *Rusalka* di Dvořák. La sua vasta discografia comprende un premiato ciclo di opere di Janáček con i Wiener Philharmoniker all'inizio degli anni Ottanta. Le registrazioni per Chandos comprendono la versione originale della *Messa glagolitica* di Janáček, *Psalmus Hungaricus* di Kodály e il Concerto per violoncello di Dvořák. Per la serie Opera in English ha registrato *Osud*, *La traviata*, *Werther*, *Julius Caesar*, *Mary Stuart*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Jenůfa*, *The Magic Flute*, *The Bartered Bride*, *The Makropoulos Case* e *Hansel and Gretel*.

Sir Charles Mackerras ha svolto inoltre ricerche approfondite sulla musica del XVIII secolo, soprattutto quella di Handel and Mozart. Ha registrato opere di Mozart e

Gilbert e Sullivan oltre a una serie completa delle sinfonie di Mozart, Beethoven e Brahms, numerosi oratori di Handel e sinfonie di Mahler ed Elgar. Attualmente è Principal Guest Conductor della Philharmonia Orchestra, Conductor Laureate della Scottish Chamber Orchestra e Conductor Emeritus della Welsh National Opera e della San Francisco Opera.

Sir Charles Mackerras ha ricevuto diverse onorificenze, tra cui il CBE nel 1974, seguito dalla nomina a baronetto nel 1979, la Medaglia di Merito della Repubblica Ceca nel 1996 e il titolo di Companion of the Order of Australia nel 1997. Nel 2003 all'elenco delle onorificenze reali britanniche si è aggiunto il Companion of Honour.

On session: Christopher Maltman, Sir Thomas Allen and Toby Spence



COMPACT DISC ONE

1 Overture

Act I

Scene One

A coffee shop. Ferrando, Don Alfonso and Guglielmo

No 1, Trio

Ferrando

- 2** Suspect Dorabella?
The thought is absurd!
No power could compel her
To forfeit her word.

Guglielmo

Suspect Fiordiligi,
She's honest as day,
The one who adores her
She ne'er would betray.

Don Alfonso

My temples are greying,
I speak from experience.
But argue no longer,
I've finished my say.

Ferrando and Guglielmo

No! No! You have spoken
Of vows to be broken,
Produce us some token
That such is the case.

Don Alfonso

I don't understand you.

Ferrando and Guglielmo (*putting their hands on their swords*)

Say on, we demand you,
Or else we will brand you
A coward and base.

Don Alfonso (*aside*)

O foolish devotion!
'Twill end but in sadness
To seek to discover
The thorn on a rose.

Ferrando and Guglielmo (*aside*)

Whoe'er hath the courage
Her truth to disparage,
Will find in her lover
The direst of foes.

Recitative

- 3** Swords or pistols? For
Both of us demand satisfaction.

Don Alfonso (*calmly*)

I'm a peace-loving person
And I handle no steel except at table.

Ferrando

You'll have to fight, or declare at once
The reason for your vile insinuation.
Your suspicion is treason!

Don Alfonso

Credulity of youth, how you amuse me!

Ferrando

You cynical old rogue, I swear by heaven!...

Don Alfonso

And I swear by experience,
For this time I'm not joking.
Are your two ladies goddesses,
Or are they women, no more, no less?

Ferrando and Guglielmo

They're women;
But... perfection... perfection...

Don Alfonso

The truly perfect woman
You believe to be true?
Beautiful faith of youth,
Age bows to you.

No. 2, Trio

(*jokingly*)

- 4** Woman's faith is like the phoenix
In remote Arabia dwelling.
Travellers of such tales are telling;
Have they seen it? No, no, not they.

Ferrando (*eagerly*)

Such a one is Dorabella!

Guglielmo (*eagerly*)

Such a one is Fiordiligi!

Don Alfonso

Neither this one, neither that one:
Women true? They never were.

Recitative

Ferrando

- 5** A poetical fiction!

Guglielmo

Eternal sneer of cynics!

Don Alfonso

So be it, but listen.
Don't take offence so readily,
What proof have you yet found that these dear
creatures
Have such peculiar natures;
That to you they are bound by a link that no
friction
Can sever?

Ferrando

Personal experience...

Guglielmo

Fine education...

Ferrando

Of kindred feeling...

Guglielmo

No thought of self at all...

Ferrando
Nothing concealing...

Guglielmo
Sympathetic and affable!

Ferrando
Engagement...

Guglielmo
Betrothal...

Ferrando
Protestations...

Don Alfonso
Blushes, and sighs, embraces, palpitations,
Forgive me if I laugh at you.

Ferrando
Confound it!
What have we said that's laughable?

Don Alfonso
Excuse me!
What if I give you proof you
Cannot deny, they're just like other women?

Guglielmo
Folly to try!

Ferrando
Absurd!

Don Alfonso
A bet?

Ferrando
We'll bet you!

Don Alfonso
A hundred guineas.

Guglielmo
A thousand if you'd rather.

Don Alfonso
You'll take it?

Ferrando
Here's my hand on it.

Don Alfonso
Remember, no whispers, no winking
To your Penelopes that we are thinking
Of having sport by making fun of them.

Ferrando
We swear it—

Don Alfonso
On the word of a soldier.

Guglielmo
On the word of a soldier.

Don Alfonso
Until tomorrow morning
You will do as I say.

Ferrando
Try us!

Guglielmo
Try anything.

Don Alfonso
Bravissimi!

Ferrando and Guglielmo
Bravissimo,
Signor Don Alfonsetto!

Ferrando
And when we've won it,
See if you find that funny.

Guglielmo (to Ferrando)
Have you thought of a way to spend the money?

No. 3, Trio
Ferrando

[6] I shall hire a band of players
And a serenade I'll bring her.
Drums and trumpets
Shall accompany the singer.

Guglielmo
I've a better gift to offer
Than your music and your song.
I shall give a lavish party
And we'll revel loud and long.

Don Alfonso
And shall I get an invitation?

Ferrando and Guglielmo
Yes, of course sir, that you may
For you'll have the bill to pay.

Ferrando, Guglielmo and Don Alfonso
And with love and wine united,
Swift shall pass the hours away.

(They depart.)

Scene Two
A garden by the seashore. Fiordiligi and Dorabella.
The two girls are each looking at a miniature
hanging at their waists.

No 4, Duet
Fiordiligi

[7] This portrait alone is
The face of Adonis
But nought to the image
Enshrined in my heart.

Dorabella

Ah, then it must follow,
That this is Apollo!
But tenfold more lovely
In nature than art!

Fiordiligi

No aspect is wanting;
A warrior and a lover!

Dorabella

You see here a feature
So gentle and relentless.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella

So happy I'm feeling!
If others delight me
Let Cupid requite me:—
May Fortune implant in my bosom
The pain of his dart.
I'll bear in my bosom the pain of his dart.

Recitative**Fiordiligi**

- [8] I can't think what's the matter —
I've a silly desire for an adventure, a little mischief.
There's something in my veins that makes me tingle.
When Guglielmo gets here, just to tease him,
I'll ask him what it means.

Dorabella

Would you believe it?

I awoke today humming
A tune that will not leave me, it does not falter,
I believe it's to do with Hymen's altar.

Fiordiligi

Give me your hand then, and let me tell your
fortune:
Oh, what a life-line, look where
It goes, it must mean you'll soon be married.

Dorabella

D'you think I would resist it?

Fiordiligi

I wouldn't be against it.

Dorabella

But it seems that the men of whom we're
thinking
Don't mean to call today. Half past eleven.

Fiordiligi

- [9] Here they are.

Scene Three

Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Don Alfonso

Dorabella

You're mistaken, it's Don Alfonso,
Their charming friend.

Fiordiligi

You're welcome,
Signor Don Alfonso.

Don Alfonso

Dearest ladies.

Dorabella

What's this? Where are the others? You are sighing.
Your news? For goodness sake, quick let us hear it!
Ferrando!

Fiordiligi

Guglielmo.

Don Alfonso

How will you bear it?

No 5, Aria

- [10] Let me try. My courage fails
To deliver the dreadful news;
At the task my spirit quails,
Words forsake me, lips refuse.
What to counsel? What to do?
How to meet the cruel blow!
As I weep for them, for you,
What to say I do not know.

Recitative**Fiordiligi**

- [11] Tell us, for pity's sake, Signor Alfonso,
Do not torture us so.

Don Alfonso

My dear young ladies,
You will need all your courage.

Dorabella

Oh Heaven!
What dreadful thing has come to pass.
What can have happened?
Can my lover be injured?

Fiordiligi

Can mine be dying?

Don Alfonso

Dead... they are not; with death the worst is over.

Dorabella

The smallpox?

Don Alfonso

No.

Fiordiligi

Or the gangrene?

Don Alfonso

Not yet.

Fiordiligi

Do tell us plainly.

Don Alfonso
For active service
They are both under orders.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella
Oh God! How awful!

Fiordiligi
When must they leave?

Don Alfonso
This morning.

Dorabella
And is there
Nothing can exempt them?

Don Alfonso
Oh, no!

Fiordiligi
Shall we not see them?

Don Alfonso
In their sorrow they had not
The courage to demand it.
But if it would not grieve you,
They're waiting.

Dorabella
Are they here?

Don Alfonso
To love you, and leave you.

Scene Four
*Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Don Alfonso; Ferrando and
Guglielmo in travelling clothes*

No 6, Quintet
Guglielmo
[12] Courage fails me! For no evasion
Can the dreadful truth dissemble.

Ferrando
In my anguish, how I tremble,
As I tell you we must part.

Don Alfonso
In the face of such calamity
Then the hero's courage rises!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella
Spare us other dread surprises!
If the worst be yet unspoken,
Ere the awful news be broken,
Plunge a dagger in my heart.

Ferrando and Guglielmo
My beloved, it's fate ordaining,
Cruel fate, that cries 'depart'.

Dorabella
Ah, no, no, you shall not leave me.

Fiordiligi
Love can conquer fate, believe me!

Dorabella
I will die, my life disdaining.

Fiordiligi
You are mine while life's remaining.

Ferrando (*aside to Don Alfonso*)
There you see now!

Guglielmo (*aside to Don Alfonso*)
As we told you!

Don Alfonso (*aside to the two men*)
To your bargain still I hold you!

**Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando, Guglielmo
and Don Alfonso**
Ah! While fate is thus designing,
Ever pain with joy combining,
Human pleasure undermining,
Nought to life can bliss impart.

Recitative
Don Alfonso (*aside*)
[13] It's a comedy, charming! So true to nature,
And capitably acted.

(*A drum sounds in the distance.*)

Ferrando
That signal!
The sound will drive me distracted.
Can I leave you, those tender arms denying!

Don Alfonso
The boat is approaching!

Fiordiligi
I'm fainting!

Dorabella
I'm dying!

Scene Five
*Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Don Alfonso, Ferrando,
Guglielmo, soldiers and people. A military march
in the distance. A boat arrives at the shore; then a
troop of soldiers enters, accompanied by a crowd of
townspeople.*

No 8, Chorus
Chorus (*soldiers and people*)
[14] Oh, the soldier's life for me!
Ever o'er new countries ranging,
Daily scene and fortune changing,
Now on land, and now on sea.
Overhead the trumpet sounding,
In his heart high courage bounding,
Comrades brave and faithful surrounding,
That the soldier's life should be.
Oh, the soldier's life for me!

Recitative

Don Alfonso

- 15** My friends, the time is flying, linger no longer:
There's no denying, duty than love is stronger.

Fiordiligi

My life!

Dorabella

Oh, my only angel!

Ferrando

My love!

Guglielmo

My darling!

Fiordiligi

Give me one look to treasure.

Don Alfonso

I see the last detachment
Has embarked on the galley;
To take the tardy few like you who dally.
There's a boat getting ready,
And awaiting your pleasure.

Ferrando and Guglielmo

One last embrace now give me.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella

Woe past all measure.

No 9, Quintet

Fiordiligi (*weeping*)

- 16** You'll write long letters often,
The cruel blow to soften.

Dorabella (*weeping*)

No less than two a day,
My dearest, you promise.

Ferrando

A sweet task you set me!

Guglielmo

Oh, yes, doubt not my complying.

Don Alfonso (*aside*)

I'll crease myself with laughter.

Fiordiligi

Think of me night and day!

Dorabella

Never forget me!

Ferrando

Addio!

Guglielmo

Addio!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella

Addio!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella, Ferrando and Guglielmo

What torture racks my heart, no words can tell.
Farewell, love, farewell!

Don Alfonso (*aside*)

I'll crease myself with laughter.

Chorus

Oh, the soldier's life for me!
Ever o'er new countries ranging,
Daily scene and fortune changing,
Now on land, and now on sea.
Overhead the trumpet sounding,
In his heart high courage bounding,
Comrades brave and faithful surrounding,
That the soldier's life should be.
Oh, the soldier's life for me!

*(While the chorus is repeated, Ferrando and
Guglielmo get into the boat, which then disappears
into the distance amidst the sound of drums, etc.
The soldiers leave, followed by the townspeople. The
sisters remain as if transfixed on the sea shore.)*

Scene Six

Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Don Alfonso.

Recitative

Dorabella (*as if waking from a trance*)

- 17** Are they gone?

Don Alfonso

They have left us.

Fiordiligi

Ah, why has fortune
So untimely bereft us?

Don Alfonso

Be courageous,
Call hope to your assistance.
(A kerchief is seen waving in the distance.)
For see there in the distance
They are waving their handkerchiefs and
weeping.

Fiordiligi (*waving*)

God bless you, my darling!

Dorabella (*waving*)

God bless you!

Don Alfonso

And may peace and the victory at last restore
them.

Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Don Alfonso
No 10, Trio

- 18** O wind gently blowing
O'er ocean be playing,
O tide calmly flowing
Their barque be conveying
In peace to the shore;

O sun brightly shining
Shed happiness o'er them,
Be nature combining
Ere long to restore them
To greet us once more.

(*The two women leave.*)

Scene Seven
Don Alfonso alone.

Recitative
Don Alfonso

- [19] So far all's going splendidly! By this time
The two devoted slaves of Mars and Venus
Are awaiting my 'orders'
For their own 'active service': now for the next
scene
To bring them all together. Oh what faces,
Sighs and lamentations!
All the better for me,
It makes my task much easier:
There are species of creature very given to
changing their affections.
Oh, wretched lovers, to gamble on such jades a
hundred guineas.
He ploughs on water, sows where the sand
confronts the wave,
And with a cobweb, holds the wind in custody,
Who all his hope reposes in women's loyalty.

Scene Eight
*A pleasant room with two chairs, a little table, etc.
Three doors, two at the sides, and one at the back.
Despina alone*

Recitative
Despina (*stirring her chocolate*)

- [20] A hell of an existence
It is to be in service!
From morning till evening
You sweat, you labour and you worry,
And yet, for everything you do, no word of thanks.
Then the bell rings. I have
The chocolate ready and waiting. I have to make it
Yet all that I'm allowed to do is smell it.
If the lady can drink it, why not the servant?
They would soon give me my notice
An example of justice that takes the biscuit.
For once I think I'll try some.
Ah, how lovely!
(*She tastes it and wipes her mouth.*)
Someone's coming.
Oh heavens! It must be the ladies.

Scene Nine
*Despina, Fiordiligi and Dorabella. Fiordiligi and
Dorabella enter in despair.*

- Despina** (*handing the cups of chocolate on a tray*)
[21] My ladies, here is your chocolate and biscuits.
(*Dorabella throws everything on the floor.*)
Heavens above! What's the matter?

Fiordiligi
Ah!

Dorabella
Ah!

(*Both women tear off their feminine adornments.*)

Despina
What ever's happened?

Fiordiligi
My griefs o'erwhelm me.
I am weary of life.

Despina
What is it this time?

Recitative
Dorabella
Stand back from me lest in my wild affliction
Some cruel hurt you suffer.
Close the shutters forever.
Hateful the daylight,
Hateful the air that I'm breathing,
Hateful my self!
Who can soothe my despair?
Who will then console me?
Be gone for pity's sake, ah, for pity's sake,
Leave me, I beg you!

No 11, Aria
[22] Cease not, remorseless love,
Thus to torment me,
Furies from Phlegethon
Still more oppress me;
Pursue my anguish
E'en unto death.
You angry basilisks
Consume my vitals.
Show the Eumenides,
If I survive it,
How, in the toils of love,
I breathe my last.

(*The two ladies seat themselves apart, distracted.*)

Recitative
Despina
[23] Signora Dorabella,
Signora Fiordiligi,
Tell me now, why this commotion?

Dorabella
Desolation and ruin!

Despina
That gives me no clear notion.

Fiordiligi
Our lovers have departed
Leaving us broken-hearted.

Despina (*laughing*)
Oh, is that all?
Well they'll come back.

Dorabella
Who knows?

Despina (*as above*)
Why say 'who knows'?
Where have they gone to?

Dorabella
They've gone to fight a battle.

Despina
All the better for them, then,
You will see them return loaded with honours.

Fiordiligi
But what if they are killed?

Despina
If that should happen
All the better for you.

Fiordiligi (*rising angrily*)
What are you saying?

Despina
I only speak the truth. If you lose these two,
There's plenty more to choose from.

Fiordiligi
Ah, bereft of Guglielmo
I'd not be long surviving.

Dorabella
Ah, deprived of Ferrando
You'd quickly see me buried alive beside him.

Despina
Oh yes, of course.
But surely you forget: though you are parted,
they live to plague you yet: don't be downhearted.
It's a little too soon to die
Of grief for the present.
Find something to amuse you!

Fiordiligi
To amuse us?

Despina
Why surely! Isn't it better
To behave as absent men do?
They think a good deal about you, but do quite
well without you.

Dorabella
What a scandalous, wicked innuendo!
They will be true whatever others may be.

Despina
Come, come, give men their due!
A good lover's a man, and not a baby!

No 12, Aria
^[24] In lovers and in soldiers,
For constancy you look?
(*laughing*)
I assure you you're totally mistook.
For in reality,
Void of devotion,
Leaves ever fluttering,
Breezes in motion,
Waver no more than
The heart of a man.
Tears of the crocodile,
Simpering faces,
Second-hand rhapsodies,
Crafty embraces,
From the beginning
Are part of their plan.
'What are the women for?
Only for pleasure,'
Men are amused with us
Just at their leisure,
Frown on or favour them
Quite as they please.
Will you be trampled on,
women, and bear it?
This be your motto then,
Up and declare it!
Flout them and jilt them
Whenever you can.
La ra la, la ta la, la ra la, la.

(*They all leave.*)

Scene Ten
Don Alfonso alone, then Despina

Recitative
Don Alfonso

^[25] What a silence! The very doors and windows
Share in the sad bereavement!
Pretty darlings!
It's not entirely their fault.
I'll bring them consolation. Those simple youths
Will shortly be arriving,
The conspiracy aiding by masquerading.
Let's think how to contrive it.
I must settle Despina: there's a danger
She might see through the masquerade, however
I could do with some help from her.
I'll risk it!
Despinetta!

Despina
Who's calling?

Don Alfonso
Boo!

Despina
Ah!

Don Alfonso
Pretty Despina,
I need you rather badly.

Despina
But I've no need of you, dear.

Don Alfonso
I could do you some good.

Despina
To a girl like me, dear,
Old gentlemen like you are worse than useless.

Don Alfonso
So you've no need of money.

(showing her a gold piece)

Despina
Is that for me?

Don Alfonso
Yes, if you try to deserve it.

Despina
And how is that done?
You'll have to speak precisely.

Don Alfonso
Very well;
But you must be discreet.

Despina
Nothing easier, go on.

Don Alfonso
Here then: listen closely.
Persons I need not mention
Are bewailing their lovers.

Despina
I know.

Don Alfonso
All they will do
Is wear themselves out in weeping and
lamenting.

Despina
For certain.

Don Alfonso
All right, supposing
We find them consolation –
And what's a better way than a flirtation?
So I have found some suitors
Who languish for the ladies
With the deepest affection.
They are also my friends and can be trusted.
I will add to my tip another guinea
If you join in the plan.

Despina
I'm not unwilling
To accept your proposition.
And with those silly creatures – easy!
But listen:

These friends of yours – they're handsome and
energetic?
Both of them well endowed,
And have they lots of money?

Don Alfonso
They've all it takes to
Delight a girl. You'll observe it when you meet them.
Shall we proceed?

Despina
Where are they now?

Don Alfonso
They're here.
Suppose I call them in.

Despina
Let them appear.

*(Don Alfonso brings in Ferrando and Guglielmo
disguised.)*

Scene Eleven
Don Alfonso, Despina, Ferrando

No 13, Sextet
Don Alfonso
[26] I've the honour to present you
To the lady Despinetta,
And, if nothing can prevent you,
You yourselves can ask her help.

Ferrando and Guglielmo *(with affected tenderness)*
By this hand I kiss with pleasure,
Will you graciously allow me
To behold the fair enchantress
Who my heart has so enslaved?

Despina *(laughing to herself)*
Lord preserve us, how peculiar!
Funny outfits, hairy features,
Sure they must be foreign creatures,
I'd say Turkish at a guess.
Slovakish? Turkish?

Don Alfonso *(aside to Despina)*
What d'you think about their chances?

Despina *(aside to Don Alfonso)*
I'd be sick at their advances.
Men so scary and so hairy,
Are an antidote to love.

Don Alfonso, Ferrando and Guglielmo
(aside)
Well, if she has no suspicion,
There's no chance of recognition,
We have nothing now to fear.

Despina *(aside, laughing)*
Funny outfits and moustaches!
I'd say something like Slovakish,
Or from Turkey at a guess.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella (*from within*)
Eh, Despina! Ola, Despina!

Despina
It's the ladies!

Don Alfonso (*to Despina*)
Now is the moment!
No retreating: I'll join you later.

(*He retires.*)

Fiordiligi and Dorabella (*entering*)
Wicked girl, this is an outrage!
You, with men, in conversation.
Put an end to this intrusion,
We forbid their presence here.

Despina, Ferrando and Guglielmo
Pardon, ladies, we implore you!
Trembling here you see before you
Two poor things who would adore you,
Love alone must bear the blame.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella
How insulting, how audacious!
How insulting, how audacious!
Go! Begone, I blush for shame!

Despina, Ferrando and Guglielmo
But one moment, only hear us!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella
No, begone and come not near us!
Such discourteous provocation
Kindles fury in my heart.
Ah! My love, forgive this outrage,
From afar defend my heart.

Ferrando and Guglielmo (*aside*)
Oh, enchanting! Their vexation
Kindles rapture in my heart.

Despina and Don Alfonso (*aside, Don Alfonso
from the door*)
Most suspicious indignation!
Women always will act a part.

Recitative
Don Alfonso (*as though entering*)
[27] What an outcry! What infamy!
What a loud demonstration!
Are you crazy?
Calm yourselves girls, I beg you,
The turmoil is attracting all the neighbours.
What's the matter? What's happened?

Dorabella (*furiously*)
Look there, outrageous.
Men! In this house of virtue.

Don Alfonso (*without seeing the men*)
What's wrong with that?

Fiordiligi (*with excitement*)
What's wrong? Today of all days
To intrude uninvited?

Don Alfonso
Gracious! Goodness! Am I waking, or am I dreaming?
My old friends from the Balkans.
You here? How so? Since when? How long?
What has brought you?
Well, well, I am delighted!
(*aside to them*)
Do play up to me.

Ferrando
It can't be Don Alfonso!

Guglielmo
Our dear old tutor!

(*They embrace him with enthusiasm.*)

Don Alfonso
Most unexpected meeting!

Despina (*to Don Alfonso*)
You've met these men before?

Don Alfonso
Of course I've met them! They're
The closest of my friends,
And best of good companions;
As you will find them also.

Fiordiligi
But why are they in our house?

Guglielmo
It was a liberty
We know: but if you ask what force hither
brought us...
Recitative
'Twas Love!

Fiordiligi
Heavens, be silent!

Ferrando
Yes, Love, or rather
You yourselves were the cause that hither
brought us.

(*The ladies retreat, pursued by the men.*)

Guglielmo
We had scarce apprehended
The incandescent sunlight of your glances...

Ferrando
...Then like moths to a lantern...

Guglielmo
...Or like butterflies mad with love, and dying...

Ferrando
...We came fluttering before you...

Guglielmo

...And behind and around you...

Ferrando and Guglielmo

...To crave your kind compassion or else to perish!

Fiordiligi

How can they dare!

Dorabella

I don't know what to answer.

(Despina leaves, frightened.)

Fiordiligi

Bold intruders, quickly
Begone from this house of virtue! Do not profane us
With the base words of your detested homage
Or our hearts, or our hearing, or our affection.
It's vain for you and any others, to threaten
To assail our resolve. Our troth untainted
We have solemnly plighted to absent lovers:
We to them will remain faithful for ever,
In the face of all danger steadfast together.

No. 14, Aria

^[28] Like a fortress in ocean founded,
Though the billows may surge around it,
So my heart relies undaunted
On its virtue and on its love.
There's a strength in vows, once plighted,

(Happy lovers who have found it!)

Fate and silent stars united,
Love's devotion cannot move!
Wretches, thus on grief intruding,
With vain hope yourselves deluding,
May our constancy unbounded
Warning and example prove!

*(The ladies prepare to leave. Ferrando calls
Fiordiligi back, Guglielmo calls Dorabella.)*

Recitative

Ferrando

^[29] Stay, I implore you!

Guglielmo *(to Dorabella)*

Remain with us, I beg you.
(aside, to Don Alfonso)
What about that?

Don Alfonso *(aside to Guglielmo)*

They're not gone yet.
(to the ladies)
They've chosen the wrong moment,
But in kindness to me, do not refuse them.

Dorabella *(angrily)*

And what makes you excuse them?

Don Alfonso

Oh! Nothing; if you knew them
You would treat them with more kindness

Two men who are so talented...
I've known them for a long time.

Fiordiligi

But why, what good can we do?

Guglielmo

You can console us,
You can comfort our pain.
You see before you
The men of all men who live but to adore you!

No. 15, Aria

^[30] O vision so charming,
Your anger disarming,
With sympathy warming
Deign on us to shine!
Whate'er you may bestow on us
We doubly will render,
With passion as impetuous,
Or blandishment as tender.
No longer reject us!
Come near and inspect us!
Pray state your objection
To form or complexion,
Suggest an improvement
In figures and poses –
We're proud of our ankles,
Our eyebrows, our noses.
Do look at our ankles,
Have a look at our eyebrows,
Or tickle our noses,

Come near and inspect us.
These noble moustaches,
The latest in fashion,
Expressive of passion
Seductively twine!

(The ladies leave in anger.)

Scene Twelve

*Ferrando, Guglielmo and Don Alfonso. The two
lovers laugh heartily, mocking Don Alfonso.*

No 16, Trio

Don Alfonso

^[31] You seem delighted!

Ferrando and Guglielmo

Yes, we're delighted.

Don Alfonso

Downright excited!

Ferrando and Guglielmo

Downright excited.

Don Alfonso

You laugh too early.

Ferrando and Guglielmo

Don't be so surly.

Don Alfonso

Laughter so clamorous,
From men so amorous,
Will call attention
If they should hear!
(aside)
You're too uproarious,
Don't be vainglorious,
Premature laughter
Of ends in a tear.

Ferrando and Guglielmo *(laughing aside, trying not to laugh)*
They're inconsolable!
Mirth uncontrollable
Must have its way,
For there's nobody near.

Recitative

Don Alfonso

- ³² When you've quite finished laughing
May I know what the joke is?

Guglielmo

Oh, what a question!
You will see, and perhaps you will believe us
When we've lightened your purse.

Ferrando *(playfully)*

Tell us, how much you'll give us
To settle up the wager!

Guglielmo *(playfully)*

We'll let you off with half!

Ferrando *(as before)*

Or out of friendship
Be content with a quarter

Don Alfonso

Ah, my poor young innocents,
Not quite so fast! I still
Intend to win my wager.

Guglielmo

The bet remains then?
Your fate you still defy?

Don Alfonso

I do, sir. And for my next move
The seducers confront them in the garden;
The strategy I'll tell you when you get there.

Guglielmo

And what about our dinner?

Ferrando

Does it matter?
When the battle is over
Just to dream of his love sustains the lover.

No. 17, Aria

- ³³ Her eye so alluring
My hope reassuring

From sorrow and sadness
My heart can beguile;
Tho' hunger distress me
And languor oppress me
Tho' hunger oppress me.
Her glance were Ambrosia,
And nectar her smile.

(Ferrando and Guglielmo leave.)

COMPACT DISC TWO

Scene Fourteen

*A pretty little garden with a grass bank at each side.
Fiordiligi and Dorabella.*

No 18, Finale

Fiordiligi and Dorabella

- ¹ Why has fate my life enshrouded
In a mystery of sorrow?
Why are happy days o'erclouded
By a gloomy haze of care?
Ah! While he was here to cheer me
Brighter yet rose every morrow,
Never shade of grief came near me,
All was well, for he was there.
Why has fate my life enshrouded
In a mystery of sorrow?
Why are happy days o'erclouded
By a gloomy haze of care?

Scene Fifteen

*Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Guglielmo and Don Alfonso;
then Despina*

Ferrando and Guglielmo *(off-stage)*

- ² To die is all I long for
Rather than this distraction.

Don Alfonso *(off-stage)*

Your patience must be stronger:
Forbear the fatal action!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella

Heavens, they sound so desperate!

Ferrando and Guglielmo

Let go of me!

Don Alfonso

Do be patient!

(Enter Ferrando and Guglielmo, each carrying a small bottle, followed by Don Alfonso.)

Ferrando and Guglielmo

This arsenic contains the power
To end my cruel pains!

(They drink, and throw away the bottles. Turning round they see the two ladies.)

Fiordiligi and Dorabella
Can they be taking poison?

Don Alfonso
Alas! There's no denying,
Their last half hour is flying,
No hope of life remains!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella
Oh, what a tragic spectacle!
My heart is frozen quite.

Ferrando and Guglielmo
You are the ones responsible.
Yet sweet the bitter potion
If you our life's devotion
With one last look requite.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella
Oh, what a tragic spectacle!
My heart is frozen quite.

**Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando, Guglielmo
and Don Alfonso**
Oh, that the night would cover me,
Veiling the awful horror.
Coldness and anguish come over me,
Feeling and sight are failing,
My heart with terror is quailing,
To speak I know not how.

(Ferrando and Guglielmo fall onto the grass banks.)

Don Alfonso
Can you behold them dying?
Never a word replying?
If only for a moment
Some little pity show.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella
Help us, help us, will no one hear us?
Alas! There's no one near us!
Despina!

Despina (*off-stage*)
Just a minute.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella
Despina!

Despina (*entering*)
What's the matter?
Ah, what a sight appalling!
Is this what Fate decreed?

Don Alfonso
Oh, 'twas a deed unhallowed!
The deadly poison swallowed
And throes of anguish followed!
Oh, this was love indeed!

Despina
Well, in this sad extremity,
It's folly most amazing
To stand here idly gazing.

Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Don Alfonso
Yes, but what can we do?

Despina
Some life is still remaining,
Tenderly support them,
Try to restore the feeling.
(to Don Alfonso)
We'll leave you here to watch them
While we for aid or remedy
In frantic haste will run.

(Despina and Don Alfonso leave.)

Fiordiligi and Dorabella
Never was fate so spiteful!
An action half so frightful
Was never seen or heard!

Ferrando and Guglielmo (*aside*)
This farce is too delightful!
I would not miss a word!
(sighing aloud)
Ah!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella (*standing at a distance
from the men*)
The wretched things are sighing!

Fiordiligi
What should we do?

Dorabella
Are they dying?

Fiordiligi
I suppose in such conditions
Some support we ought to give.

Dorabella (*approaching*)
They've a certain strange attraction.

Fiordiligi (*approaching*)
Surely there's a case for action!

Dorabella
Ah, how cold, how cold his skin is!

Fiordiligi
Nothing like as cold as mine is!

Dorabella
Does his heart beat?

Fiordiligi
Not even slightly.

Dorabella
This one's beating very lightly.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella
Ah! If help is long arriving
There's no hope of their surviving.

Ferrando and Guglielmo (*aside*)
See how kindly and compassionate
They are gradually becoming.
We shall see them soon relenting,
Pity is akin to love.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella
This disaster most appalling
Must the heart to pity move.

Scene Sixteen
*Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando, Guglielmo,
Despina disguised as a doctor, and Don Alfonso*

Don Alfonso
3 Now, ladies, calm yourselves.
Here's the physician!

Ferrando and Guglielmo (*aside*)
A clever masquerade,
It is Despina.

Despina
*Salvete, amabiles
Bones puellas!*

Fiordiligi and Dorabella
His speech is quite beyond
Our comprehension!

Despina
You've but to order me

What I shall speak in:
From Dutch to Syrian,
Welsh or Illyrian,
Celtic or Arabic,
Greek or Hindu.

Don Alfonso
So many languages
Are quite unneeded.
Matters more serious
Wait your attention.
They've taken arsenic,
What shall we do?

Fiordiligi and Dorabella
Tell us, good doctor,
What shall we do?

Despina (*she feels the pulse and the brow of one
and then the other*)
Completely comatose,
System much shaken,
Say was it from a dose
That they have taken!
And if so, say what it was,
If cold or hot it was.
In many doses
Or only one.

Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Don Alfonso
They've taken arsenic
Straight from the bottle.

Took it internally
Caused them to mottle
And in a moment
Fell on the floor.

Despina
Don't get excited
Or overheated;
Just pay attention
To what I do.

Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Don Alfonso
He's got a magnet,
How will he use it?

Despina (*she touches each mock invalid on the
head with a magnet and pulls it along their bodies*)
I am a pupil of
Doctor Mesmer,
And he invented it.
In its simplicity,
Passing in mystery
All facts of history,
Is all his own!

Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Don Alfonso
See, they are quivering,
Shivering, shivering,
Reviving silently,
Excited violently.

Despina
Now then support them,
And firmly hold.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella
See, we are ready!

(*They put their hands on the men's brows.*)

Despina
Keep calm and steady!
Coraggio! That's done the trick!
From death we've got them!

Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Don Alfonso
See, they awake again.
Notice they take again!
Oh, such a doctor's worth
Whole mines of gold!

Ferrando and Guglielmo (*getting to their feet*)
Where is this? What heavenly region?
Who is he, serene and mighty?
Do I wake in realms Elysian?
(*Ferrando to Fiordiligi and Guglielmo to Dorabella*)
Are you Pallas or Aphrodite?
No, it's you my fair enslaver.
Yours the charm my limbs enchanting;
If my pains can win your favour,
Grant me torment more intense!

(*They embrace the ladies tenderly and kiss their hands.*)

Despina and Don Alfonso (*to the ladies*)

Slight derangement still remaining;
They intend you no offence.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella

That may be, but such extravagance
Savours more of base pretence.

Ferrando and Guglielmo (*aside, while the others repeat their verses*)

Now is laughter uncontrollable.
What delightful innocence!
(*Ferrando to Fiordiligi and Guglielmo to Dorabella*)
Goddess, must you scorn undo me?

Fiordiligi and Dorabella

Oh, why will he thus pursue me?

Ferrando and Guglielmo (*to the ladies*)

Will you not with smiles renew me? (*aside*)
Now is laughter uncontrollable.
What delightful innocence!
(*to the ladies*)
Let me kiss you e'er I perish,
Just one kiss for me to cherish.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella

Heaven! He'd kiss me?

Despina and Don Alfonso (*to the ladies*)

Wretched creature!
Just one act of pure good nature!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella

Such a thing a modest woman
Would consent to do for no one.
It's an insult to my sadness,
It's an insult to my love!

Despina and Don Alfonso

Here's a tableau most amusing
Men desiring and girls refusing,
Nothing could be more confusing/ridiculous
Than this anger and all this fuss.

Ferrando and Guglielmo (*aside*)

Here's a tableau most amusing,
Men desiring and girls refusing,
Nothing could be more confusing/ridiculous
Than this anger and all this fuss.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella

Say no more, the Devil take you!
May the poison madder make you!
Or if love be worse than madness
Not a pang will we allay.

(*The sisters repeat this verse while the other four sing as follows.*)

Despina and Don Alfonso

Here's a tableau most amusing,
Men desiring, girls refusing,
Nothing could be more ridiculous
Than this anger and all this fuss.

It is all dissimulation:

Women's ways too well I know.

Ferrando and Guglielmo (*aside*)

Here's a tableau most amusing,
Men desiring, girls refusing,
Nothing could be more confusing
Than this anger and all this fuss.
Great would be my indignation
Were they not to answer 'No'.



Title page of the original edition of
da Ponte's libretto for *Così fan tutte*

Act II

Scene One

A room. Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Despina

Recitative

Despina

- ⁴ Well, I declare, you are
A funny pair of young ladies!

Fiordiligi

Oh, do be quiet!
What have we got to laugh at?

Despina

Not at me, Miss!

Fiordiligi

Well, at what then?

Despina

Yourselves.

Dorabella

Ourselves?

Despina

Yourselves!
Are you women, or not?

Fiordiligi

Why not women!

Despina

'Why not women!'
Well then behave like women.

Dorabella

But how?

Despina

By treating love as a diversion:
If the moment offers
Don't neglect a good chance. Sometimes be fickle,
At other times be constant.
Be formal or coquettish,
But avoid the disgrace that comes when women
Believe that men have scruples;
Enjoy the figs, but don't forget the apples.

Fiordiligi (*aside*)

You horrid girl!
(*to Despina*)
I think the way
You talk is disgusting.

Despina

Give it a try then!
For I truly believe you'll find it a distraction
From the grief that has bereft you.
For example,
Try suiting talk to action,
They were soldiers who left you, to show your
sympathy
With military matters, try recruiting!

Fiordiligi

Do think what you are saying,
How could you be so careless?
Do you think that we'll believe you?
Why should our house provide idle gossip?
We'd risk our lovers' anger,
And their faith in our vows rashly endanger?

Despina

Do you think they would cherish
Such unworthy suspicion?

Dorabella

Reputation with ladies of position
Honourable as we are,
By a slander may perish.

Despina

As far as that goes,
The risk is not too serious.
Should there be any gossip,
The men were after me.

Dorabella

Who would believe that?

Despina

Oh, thank you! Is a maid not

Good enough to have a beau,
Or two if she can get them?
Do let them call again.

Dorabella

And then?

Despina

And then!
Join them in conversation!
(*aside*)
Down go the first defences.

Fiordiligi

What could we find to say?

Despina

Talk of the weather!
Why you're no more like women than bits of
leather!

No 19, Aria

- ⁵ At fifteen a girl already
Must be truly wise and worldly.
She must know for good or evil
What the devil does with his tail;
If she knows the little catches
Which a little experience teaches,
By pretending and delighting,
She will surely tame the male.
Modest and wary
Yet all inviting,
Of favours chary
Yet all delighting;
All charms revealing,
All heart concealing;

Smiling so gushingly,
Lying unblushingly,
Spare no expedient
To make obedient,
Handsome or comely,
Ugly and homely,
Anything else in the
Shape of a man.
(*aside*)
Artful in scheming,
Artless in seeming,
Stooping to conquer
Be ever her plan.
By art alluring
Victims securing
Queen of the nation
Gracious and glorious,
Ever victorious,
She wins the day.
I see they're weakening
By their demeanour.
Clever Despina,
She knows the way.

(*She leaves.*)

Scene Two
Fiordiligi and Dorabella

Recitative
Fiordiligi

[6] Well, sister! What do you think?

Dorabella
I am astounded;
For a maid such ideas are simply dreadful.

Fiordiligi
She must be quite demented.
As if she could persuade us
To adopt her suggestion.

Dorabella
Oh, quite out of the question
If you look at it that way.

Fiordiligi
What other way, dear,
Could it ever be looked at?
Do you believe it proper
For two ladies engaged to be married
To follow her example?

Dorabella
Not really proper
But I don't see the harm.

Fiordiligi
Think of the gossip!
We'd never live it down.

Dorabella
But we could tell them
They come to see Despina.

Fiordiligi
Oh, you've acquired
A latitude of conscience. What should we say
To our fiancés?

Dorabella
Nothing.
The affair will be over.
They'll know nothing about it.
There's no need to upset them. You know the
proverb,
'Where ignorance is bliss'.

Fiordiligi
But our affection?

Dorabella
Runs in the old direction;
We only seek diversion to ward off melancholy
While they are absent.
There is nothing in that to be ashamed of.

Fiordiligi
Very true!

Dorabella
Well then?

Fiordiligi
Well then,
As you wish! But remember,
I'm blameless if it brings complications.

Dorabella
With such careful precautions,
Could anything go wrong? Now for the strangers.
There is one point unsettled –
To arrange how the spoils shall be divided.

Fiordiligi
It's you who must decide, dear.

Dorabella
I'm quite decided.

No 20, Duet
[7] I prefer the gentle dark one,
With the greater sense of fun.

Fiordiligi
Very well, I'll take the fair one
And the comedy's begun.

Dorabella
To his words of ardent passion
Jokingly will I reply.

Fiordiligi
Sigh and glance in his own fashion
I'll return each glance and sigh.

Dorabella
He will say, 'Behold my anguish!'

Fiordiligi
He will say, 'For you I languish!'

Fiordiligi and Dorabella

We will pass the time in pleasure.
With each other we will vie.

(As they leave, they meet Don Alfonso.)

Scene Three

Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Don Alfonso

Recitative

Don Alfonso

- [8] Come at once to the garden.
You most fortunate ladies! It's amazing!
Such hamony! Such voices!
This is truly spectacular – enchanting!
With a spell they'll surround you.

Dorabella

Whatever can it be?

Don Alfonso

Come, they'll astound you!

(They leave.)

Scene Four

A garden by the seashore, with grassy seats and two stone tables. At the landing-place a boat adorned with flowers. Ferrando, Guglielmo, Fiordiligi, Despina, Don Alfonso, sailors and servants. Ferrando and Guglielmo and a band of singers and musicians in the boat; Despina in the garden;

Fiordiligi and Dorabella accompanied by Don Alfonso enter from one side: attendants in rich liveries receive them.

No 21, Duet and Chorus

Ferrando and Guglielmo

- [9] Gentle zephyr, softly sighing,
To the strains of love replying,
In the ear of yonder fair maiden
All my longing, my vows repeat!
Take my kisses, breathe them o'er her,
Murmur low how I adore her!
Take my tears, and with them laden
Pour the offering at her feet.

Chorus

Gentle zephyr, softly sighing,
All my whispered vows repeat.

(During the chorus, Ferrando and Guglielmo come off the boat with garlands of flowers. Don Alfonso and Despina accompany them to the ladies who are stunned into silence.)

Recitative

Fiordiligi and Dorabella

- [10] What is this masquerading?

Despina (to Ferrando and Guglielmo)

Now for your speech, take courage!
Or have you lost
The use of your tongues completely?

(The barge leaves the shore and disappears.)

Ferrando

I'm gasping, I'm diffident
And I tremble all over.

Guglielmo

The strange magic of beauty enthalls a lover!

Don Alfonso

Their gratitude is evident.

Fiordiligi

We greet you!

Dorabella

Pray be assured we're glad once more to meet you.

Ferrando

Dear lady.

Guglielmo

No, dearest ladies.

Ferrando (to Guglielmo)

Speak for the two.

Guglielmo (to Ferrando)

No, no, I'll follow you.

Don Alfonso

Oh, this is too ridiculous!
Such ceremonious fashions
Are utterly exploded. Despinetta,

For a scene make you ready.
I'll be 'my lord', you shall enact 'my lady'.

No 22, Quartet

(He takes Dorabella by the hand; Despina takes Fiordiligi's.)

- [11] Now give me your hand
And come forward a pace.
(to the lovers)
Since you will say nothing,
I'll speak in your place.
(to the ladies)
The humblest of slaves
Is imploring your pardon!
His sorrow beholding,
Your heart do not harden;
Oh light be his sentence!

Ferrando and Guglielmo (repeating the last word in the same tone)
...Sentence!...

Don Alfonso

...Nor doubt his repentance...

Ferrando and Guglielmo (as before)

...Repentance!...

Don Alfonso

...If love cannot move you,
Compassion must try.

Ferrando and Guglielmo (*repeating the last two lines, with a sigh*)

... If love cannot move you
Compassion must try.

Don Alfonso (*to the ladies*)

You're silent, did you hear me?
You're silent, what's your answer?
You're laughing, oh, you mock me.

Despina (*standing in front of the two ladies*)

Then with your permission
I'll give your reply.
Past things are past undoing,
Old loves beyond renewing!
Sever the bond for ever
Symbol of servitude.
(*She takes Dorabella's hand, Don Alfonso takes Fiordiligi's; they break the garlands and they lace them around the arms of the lovers. Then to the lovers.*)
Now take my hand in token
The ice has now been broken,
Then sigh no more.

Despina and Don Alfonso (*to one side, sottovoce*)

And now we must be going
And leave them to their wooing.
I'll wager with the Devil
A surrender will ensue.

(*They leave.*)

Scene Five

*Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando and Guglielmo.
Dorabella on Guglielmo's arm; Fiordiligi with
Ferrando, without giving him her arm. They make
a little silent scene, gazing at each other, sighing,
laughing, etc.*

Recitative

Fiordiligi

¹² Isn't the weather lovely!

Ferrando

I find it rather too warm.

Dorabella

Oh, how lovely the trees are!

Guglielmo

Very lovely! But alas
It seems there's far more leaf than fruit.

Fiordiligi

It is cooler
In the shade of the pine trees.
Pray let me take your arm!

Ferrando

With greatest pleasure,
Your wish is my commandment.

Fiordiligi

You're too civil.

Ferrando (*sottovoce, as he passes Guglielmo*)

Now for the fateful moment.

Fiordiligi

What was your observation?

Ferrando

Just a recommendation
To follow our example.

Dorabella (*to Guglielmo*)

Shall we also take the air?

Guglielmo

Only too pleased to.
(*They stroll on. After a moment of silence...*)
Oh, dear!

Dorabella

I beg your pardon?

Guglielmo

There's a feeling inside me,
An awful desperate feeling.
I'm afraid it will kill me.

(*The others continue their scene silently in the distance.*)

Dorabella

I'm not the least surprised at it.
(*to Guglielmo*)
The poison that you swallowed
Would unhinge any system.

Guglielmo (*with excitement*)

Ah, but the poison had an essence (if you'll excuse
My boldness) which is kindled
Into fire by your presence!
(*The others stroll off-stage.*)
This is merely a token,
Will you deign to accept it?

Dorabella

A heart?

Ferrando

A symbol to represent the heart
Which beats in my bosom, which beats for you
alone!

Dorabella (*aside*)

A wonderful present.

Guglielmo

Will you wear it?

Dorabella

I must not.
You attempt to seduce an honest woman.

Guglielmo

I love you!

Dorabella

Oh, for shame!

Guglielmo
But I adore you!

Dorabella
No, really!

Guglielmo
Do you reproach me?

Dorabella
I am greatly to blame.

Guglielmo
The blame is equal
If you're willing to share it.
Will you wear it?

Dorabella (*after a moment, with a sigh*)
I'll wear it!

Guglielmo (*aside*)
Oh, forgive me, Ferrando!
(*to Dorabella*)
Let me declare it!

No 23, Duet
[18] This heart that I give you
I pray you to treasure,
And yours in return, love,
Oh, render to me.

Dorabella
The heart that you give me

I take it with pleasure,
But that which you ask for ...
No longer is free.

Guglielmo
No, do not deceive me!
What beating is that?

Dorabella
It's your own heart, believe me,
That here says pit-pat.

Guglielmo
Ah, I hear it pit-a-pit-a-pat.

Dorabella
'Tis your own that mutters pit-a-pat.

Dorabella and Guglielmo
Hear it pit-a-pit-a-pit-a pat.
The heart that was mine, love,
For you now is beating,
To you is repeating
My own pit-a-pat.

Guglielmo (*he tries to exchange her miniature for his pendant*)
With you let me leave it.

Dorabella
No, that may not be.

Guglielmo
Oh come now, receive it.

Dorabella
How can I!

Guglielmo
Close your eyes.

(*He turns her face gently to one side, removes the miniature and replaces it with the pendant.*)

Dorabella (*aside*)
Oh, how my confusion
And blushes to hide.

Guglielmo (*aside*)
Ferrando forgive me.
How shall I confide?
(*to Dorabella*)
Your eyes you may open.

Dorabella
What folly!

Guglielmo
Accept it,
Resistance is vain.

Dorabella and Guglielmo
Oh happy communion
Of new love requiting,
To pleasure inviting,
What exquisite pain!

(*They leave with their arms around each other.*)

Scene Six
Fiordiligi and Ferrando. Fiordiligi enters in agitation, followed by Ferrando.

Recitative
Ferrando
[14] Cruel one, would you leave me?

Fiordiligi
I see a basilisk,
A hydra, a vicious scorpion.

Ferrando
All too clear is your answer.
Basilisk, hydra and vicious scorpion and, if there be
In Libyan desert monsters more appalling,
Then to those you'd compare me.

Fiordiligi
I know it, I know it.
You destroy my composure.

Ferrando
To replace it with rapture.

Fiordiligi
Go and no more molest me.

Ferrando
Just one glance will suffice me.

Fiordiligi

Leave me!

Ferrando

Yes, I leave you,
Since those proud eyes command me to obey
you.
Oh Heaven! That look was tender, those eyes
betray you.

Scene Seven

Fiordiligi alone

Recitative

Fiordiligi

^[15] He's leaving. Listen!... Ah no! No, let, him leave me!
So hastens from my presence the fatal object
Of my folly and weakness. Ah, what a torment,
I suffer in his presence... A just affliction,
I deserve all my anguish. At such a moment,
How could I dare give audience
To the passions of this man? To treat with jesting
An intention so serious? Oh, my beloved,
You'd be right to condemn me, leave me for ever.
This passion, this sudden burning in my senses
Is not blameless affliction: it's madness, and
weakness,
Confusion, void of reason,
Fatal error! It's falsehood and treason!

No 25, Rondo

^[16] Ah, my love, I pray forgive me
For the wrong my soul has harboured,

'Neath these branches, among these shadows,
I will hide it for evermore.
I will purge this base emotion
With my love and my devotion.
I will banish the dread remembrance
Which with horror shames my heart.
Ah, my love so true! So tender!
What have I to give you now?
For your love I can but render
Faithless heart and broken vow.

(She leaves.)

COMPACT DISC THREE

Scene Eight

Ferrando and Guglielmo

Recitative

Ferrando (*very happily*)

^[1] We've done it! Poor Don Alfonso!

Guglielmo

A skirmish? An ambush?

Ferrando

Neither. A total victory! Fiordiligi
Is modesty incarnate.
She's as chase as a lily,
And as true to Guglielmo as any compass.
She dismissed me with outrage,

She reviled me, abused me,
Giving positive evidence in this manner;
You can safely remain sure of her honour.

Guglielmo

Bravo you, bravo me!
Brava my true Penelope!
Come, let me embrace you
For such wonderful tidings
Oh, my faithful messenger.

Ferrando

And my Dorabella?
Did she reject your wooing?
How could I ever doubt it? I need no answer,
Knowing how much she loves me.

Guglielmo

And yet, in confidence,
It wouldn't be so bad if you did have some
doubts.

Ferrando

What's that?

Guglielmo

Just in a manner of speaking,
(I wish I could sugar the pill).

Ferrando

Heavens! Are you suggesting Dorabella is faithless?
Have you succeeded? Even if I suspected?

Guglielmo

It is always wise to be a little suspicious.

Ferrando

By heaven, now tell me,
Are you suggesting Dorabella is false?
But no, you're joking! Doing her an injustice.
She loves me, adores no one but me.

Guglielmo

Clearly, a love so intense that to show it,
Here is the proof she gave me.
Do you know it?

Ferrando (*furiously*)

Gave you my portrait!
Oh perfidy!

Guglielmo

Where are you going?

Ferrando

To tear the heart out of her faithless bosom,
And to avenge love and devotion slighted.

Guglielmo

Calm yourself!

Ferrando

No, release me!

Guglielmo

Are you crazy?

Will you indeed abandon yourself to ruin
For a worthless woman?
Let not woman's folly drive you to desperation.

Ferrando

Traitress! Such protestations and promises,
Tender glances and fond embraces
In a moment forgotten
As a vision of night!

Guglielmo

Don't ask me to explain.

Ferrando

What can I live for?
What can I do now?
What aim in life is left me?
Pity a broken heart,
Grant me your guidance.

Guglielmo

My friend I must admit
I've no guidance to give!

Ferrando

Treacherous and heartless!
Scarce a day had I left her.

Guglielmo

It's a more wicked world than we had dreamed of!

No 26, Aria

[2] Ladies have such variations,

Permutations, fluctuations,
That to hear the mournful tale
Of a lover's provocations
It would make the cheek grow pale!
Charming creatures! We adore them!
And they know it! Far, far too well!
Every day we bow before them,
Ne'er against their power rebel,
Well they know it.
But, alas, their vacillations, complications,
Are enough to break the spell!
Bravely soldiers may protect them,
Sailors guard the seas afar,
Priests may counsel and direct them,
Lawyers argue at the Bar –
Yet the ladies' retractations, abjurations,
Baffle men of peace and war!
Lovely forms and charming faces!
Nature, in her kindly plan,
Showered them lavishly with graces,
Ever since the world began;
But, the ladies' aberrations,
Hesitations,
Mystify adoring man!
But what feminine evasions,
And mental reservations,
O ladies, ladies, ladies, lovely ladies,
When you talk of love's vexations
All my pity's for the man!

Scene Nine

Ferrando, then Guglielmo and Don Alfonso

Recitative

Ferrando

[3] Ah! My brain is distracted! The voice of reason
Is overwhelmed by the conflicting urges of passion
So completely unheard of is my dilemma,
That there's no one, but no one,
Competent to advise me... Alfonso, Alfonso,
How you must laugh at me
And at my stupid failure.
But I will have revenge! Oh faithless woman!
You have spurned my devotion.
Now dread my retribution.
Retribution, empty word when my heart
Pleads for her pardon.
(Don Alfonso meets Guglielmo and stays to listen.)

No 27, Cavatina

[4] Her treason is poison
That seizes my heart.
Though her truth may falter,
Yet mine cannot alter,
I still hear within me
The voices of love!

Scene Ten

*A room with several doors, little tables and a mirror.
Dorabella and Despina; then Fiordiligi*

Recitative

Despina

[5] Now at last you are acting
As a same woman should do!

Dorabella

Indeed, Despina,
I resisted in vain. The wicked wretch
So hotly pursued me, I had to listen. He wooed me
With a fire that would melt a heart of stone.

Despina

Hot as a little demon!
(Fiordiligi enters.)
Oh goodness, here's your sister –
And furious.

Fiordiligi

Oh, you wretches!
It is entirely your fault
That it's turned out so badly.

Despina

What's the matter?
Why are you taking on so?

Dorabella

Has anything distressed you?

Fiordiligi

The Devil take us all,
Myself, you, you too, Don Alfonso, those evil
strangers
And every soul in creation!

Dorabella

Are you out of your senses?

Fiordiligi

Worse than madness,
Total disaster. I'm in love, and yet I know
My love is not only for Guglielmo!

Despina

Even better!

Dorabella

Sister,
A hundred thousand kisses!
Yours the fair one, mine the dark one:
Let's have a double wedding.

Fiordiligi

What are you saying?
Have you no pang of conscience,
No concern, no remorse? Our poor fiancés
Have departed in grief this very morning.
Your attitude shocks me.
Where on earth did you learn it?
It's not like you at all. How can you do it?

Dorabella

In our condition it's better to be honest.

No 28, Aria

⁶ Young love is unrelenting,
A serpent full of wiles,
While lovers are lamenting,
Love only nods and smiles!
He comes all unassuming,

But makes the heart a slave,
Then on his power presuming,
Takes back the joy he gave!
Full of contentment, a warm contentment,
If you his rule obey,
But bitter his resentment
If you dispute his sway.
Nothing can you deny him,
Whate'er he bids you do,
It's folly to deny him:
And you will find it so!

(Dorabella and Despina leave.)

Scene Eleven

*Fiordiligi alone; then Ferrando, Guglielmo and
Don Alfonso in another room; later Despina*

Recitative**Fiordiligi**

⁷ All the world is conspiring
To compel me to yield. But no, I'll perish
Before complying! I'll tell Despina,
*(Ferrando, Guglielmo and Don Alfonso are seen
through the open door, watching her from the next
room.)*
If he comes here again,
She must send him away. The man I first loved
I'll not betray.

Guglielmo (to his friends)

Bravissima!
She is chaste as Diana. Did you hear her?

Fiordiligi

Could I trust Dorabella?
No, I have cause to doubt her. Softly, what a notion!
Or does folly possess me? If I could dare it,
The uniforms would serve us
Which our lovers left behind...
They shall! Despina!
Despina!

Despina (entering)

Did you call?

Fiordiligi

Go at once to my dressing room,
Take the key of the wardrobe,
Rummage behind the dresses and bring me quickly
The sabres and the jackets and both the cloaks
That you will find there.

Despina

What do you think you're doing?

Fiordiligi

Go on and don't ask questions!

Despina (aside)

Well, what a way to talk, Miss High and Mighty!

(She leaves.)

Fiordiligi

It's the last chance. Will it fail us?
If only Dorabella

Will follow my example, we'll join them, we'll
join them.
It's the only way left us
To escape from temptation.

Don Alfonso (aside)

Oh I see what she's after!
(Re-enter Despina with the uniforms.)
Go ahead, seize your chance.

Despina (to Fiordiligi)

Here they are.

Fiordiligi

Now then,
Have some post-horses ordered,
Let them wait at the gate. Tell Dorabella that
I'll talk to her here.

Despina

Oh, very well, Miss.
(aside)
But I really believe she's going crazy.

Scene Twelve

*Fiordiligi; later Ferrando. Guglielmo and
Don Alfonso in the other room*

Fiordiligi

This is Ferrando's jacket,
It's exactly my size, and Guglielmo's

Will suffice Dorabella. None will suspect us
And battle's fury not affright us. We'll join
Our lovers, all danger scorning,
Until death can unite us.

No 29, Duet

- 8 All too slowly the hours are fleeting,
Till that happy hour of meeting;
Thus arrayed, all danger scorning,
To my lover's arms I fly.
To his beating heart he'll press me,
And with tender joy caress me.

Ferrando (*to Fiordiligi, as he enters*)
While, alas your absence mourning,
I am left alone to die.

Fiordiligi
Do not taunt me, I implore you.
Leave, ah, leave me!

Ferrando
No, I adore you!
(*He takes his sword from the table and unsheathes it, etc.*)
If my very presence pain you,
If I have no hope to gain you,
This alone I pray you grant me,
Now by this dear hand to die.

(*He falls on his knees.*)

Fiordiligi
Leave, ah, leave me!

Ferrando
Then all is over.

Fiordiligi
What on earth can you be asking?

Ferrando
End my pain, or my existence.

Fiordiligi
To his prayer there's no resistance!

Ferrando
Don't reject me!

(*He takes her hand and kisses it.*)

Fiordiligi
Love direct me!

Ferrando
Turn away your gaze no longer,
See in me a faithful suitor,
Husband or lover, whate'er you grant me.
(*very tenderly*)
Be my love, delay no more!

Fiordiligi (*trembling*)
Frail am I, oh God, I weaken:
Do with me as you desire.

(*Don Alfonso restrains Guglielmo from bursting in.*)

Fiordiligi and Ferrando
Now together, by love united,
Life shall seem no longer blighted.
Sorrow past shall be requited
With delight and joy divine.

(*They leave.*)

Scene Thirteen
Guglielmo and Don Alfonso; then Ferrando

Recitative
Guglielmo (*entering with Don Alfonso*)
9 That's enough for me! Have I been dreaming?
How did I ever trust her?

Don Alfonso
For goodness sake be quiet!

Guglielmo
Let someone pluck my beard out
Or brand me with an iron
Then I'll leap into that volcano's crater
Could that be Fiordiligi?
My Penelope, the Diana of chastity?
Dissembler, double dealer,
Imposter, serpent, traitress!

Don Alfonso (*happily, aside*)
I'll let him blow off steam.

Ferrando (*entering*)
Well, well!

Guglielmo
Well, what?

Ferrando
Well, your dear Fiordiligi?

Guglielmo
My torment, flower of evil, the devil devour her,
And me as well.

Ferrando (*ironically*)
We're in the same case.

Guglielmo
Ah, stop it! Admit that we're both defeated,
And think up some good way of
Retaliation.

Don Alfonso
I tell you what: marry them.

Guglielmo
I would far sooner marry
The mother of the Gorgon.

Ferrando
Or sleep in Vulcan's smithy.

Guglielmo
Surrounded by the Furies.

Don Alfonso

Then you'd remain a bachelor for ever?

Ferrando

If I never discover
A woman who is worthy!

Don Alfonso

There's not a lot to choose from,
But how would others fare if those were wanting?
Deep down, you do still love them,
Although you have contrived to pluck their
feathers.

Guglielmo

I'm afraid so!

Ferrando

Afraid so!

Don Alfonso

May I suggest that this evening
We have a double wedding. But wait,
While a verse I shall sing you,
And the fact that I state to sense may bring you!

No 30, Aria

- [10] Man accuses the woman, but I excuse her
And my forgiveness never will refuse her.
Man's love is a passion, a life's anxiety,
To her the charm of love's variety.
The lover who may find himself deluded,

Cannot blame her for that, the fault is Nature's;
Be she youthful, aged, a scarecrow, a beauty!
Say the words after me: *Così fan tutte!*

Ferrando, Guglielmo and Don Alfonso

Così fan tutte!

Scene Fourteen

Ferrando, Guglielmo, Don Alfonso and Despina

Recitative

Despina (*entering*)

- [11] Well, gentlemen, you've won them.
And my two pretty ladies
Are agreeable to marry you, so on your part
I ventured
To promise you'd be quite ready
To start the honeymoon this evening. I must be
off now
In search of a notary
To draw up the marriage contract; meanwhile
the ladies
Will be pleased to receive you.
Now, are you quite contented?

Ferrando, Guglielmo and Don Alfonso

Oh, abundantly!

Despina

Who Despina engages,
Will find she never fails to earn her wages!

(*They leave.*)

Scene Fifteen

*A very luxurious and illuminated saloon with
musicians at the back. A table laid for four persons,
with silver cutlery etc.. Despina, servants, musicians
and later Don Alfonso*

No 31, Finale

Despina (*to the servants*)

- [12] Come, my friends, no more delaying.
Hurry with your preparations,
Bring the table decorations,
Set it all in rich array.
Let us do our best to honour
An exceptional occasion.
(*to the musicians*)
For be sure a double wedding
Does not happen every day.

Chorus (*servants*)

Let us help her, as she asks us,
With the special preparations,
And the table decorations
We will set in rich array.

Don Alfonso (*entering*)

Bravo, bravo! That's really splendid!
Nothing's wanting, it's enchanting!
A reward of fine proportions
Both the parties can afford.
(*While Don Alfonso sings, the musicians are tuning up*)
Very soon they will be entering,
Please applaud them on arrival.

Sing a festive song to greet them.
Fill the air with joyful sound.

Despina and Don Alfonso (*sottovoce, leaving by
separate doors*)

It's a merry jest we've plotted
And absurd as any play!

Scene Sixteen

*Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando Guglielmo, servants
and musicians. As the couples move forward, the
chorus sings and the orchestra starts up a march.*

Chorus

- [13] May the love, that has united them,
bring delight beyond expressing!
May good fortune be benevolent,
And with every other blessing
May their offspring come to favour them,
Soon to equal them in joy!

(*The chorus leaves: four servants remain to serve the
bridal couples, who seat themselves at the table.*)

Ferrando and Guglielmo

On your charms, my new-found treasure,
I shall never tire of gazing!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella

In my veins I feel such pleasure,
With its power my sense amazing.

Ferrando and Guglielmo
You're enchanting.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella
You're delightful!

Ferrando and Guglielmo
Eyes bewitching.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella
– And lips inviting –

Ferrando, Guglielmo, Fiordiligi and Dorabella
(*touching the glasses with their lips*)
Touching, sipping! Sipping, touching!

Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Ferrando
In our eyes and our embraces,
Let us banish all sorrow's traces.
(*The ladies drink*)
Tears of sorrow are no longer now remaining,
Of the past the image fades.

Guglielmo (*aside*)
Ah! I wish their drink were poisonous,
Cruel, heartless, cunning jades!

Scene Seventeen
Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando, Guglielmo and Don Alfonso; later Despina disguised as a notary

Don Alfonso (*entering*)
[14] Happy lovers! Fate conniving

Lends her aid to our contriving!
Soon the Notary arriving
Ipsa facto you shall see.

Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando and Guglielmo
Bravo! bravo! Let him enter.

Don Alfonso
I will call him. This is he.

Despina (*entering, and in nasal voice*)
Heaven pours its blessings o'er you!
Ladies, here you see before you
Me, the lawyer, Baccalaureo,
Bearing the important deed;
Which, with all its regulations,
Covenants and stipulations,
By your kind permission sitting,
Slightly coughing, nought omitting,
I will now commence to read.

Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando, Guglielmo and Don Alfonso
Bravo, bravo, yes indeed!

Despina
By this contract here indicted
Now in wedlock are united
Fiordiligi to Leander
Dorabella to Philander;
Noble sisters of Ferrara,
Gentlemen of South Albania,

Of their own free will contracted;
And for dowry 'tis enacted.

Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando and Guglielmo
None is wanted, that's for granted.
As you make it we will take it,
We will sign, no more delay!

(*Only the two ladies sign.*)

Despina and Don Alfonso
Bravo, bravo, that's the shortest way.

(*The document is still in Don Alfonso's hand, when the loud sound of drums and singing is heard in the distance.*)

Chorus (*off-stage*)
Oh, the soldier's life for me,
Ever o'er new countries ranging,
Daily scene and fortune changing,
Now on shore and now on sea.

Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Despina, Ferrando and Guglielmo
What is that? What joyful singing?

Don Alfonso
Wait awhile; I'll go and see.
(*He goes to the window*)
Misericordia!
Terror enthral me!

Day most unfortunate!
Your danger appals me.
Here come your lovers.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella
Here come our lovers?

Don Alfonso
Who left you sighing,
With joyful faces
Again returning
Coming ashore.

Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando and Guglielmo
How unpropitious!
Barbarous torture,
Why so malicious?
What can we do?

(*The servants remove the table and the musicians leave hurriedly.*)

Fiordiligi and Dorabella (*to their lovers*)
You cannot stay here.

Ferrando, Guglielmo, Despina and Don Alfonso
If they suspect us here?

Fiordiligi and Dorabella
Do not delay here!

Ferrando, Guglielmo, Despina and Don Alfonso
If they detect us here.

(Don Alfonso leads Despina to another room.)

Fiordiligi and Dorabella

Go and conceal yourselves,
For goodness sake.

(They lead their lovers to another room. They
re-emerge, unseen, and leave.)
Now Heaven defend us!

Don Alfonso

Do not alarm yourselves!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella

Good fortune send us!

Don Alfonso

But only calm yourselves...

Fiordiligi and Dorabella (*almost frantically*)

Or what the end will be,
Oh who can tell?

Don Alfonso

I'll dare to promise you,
All shall go well.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella

O'er my heart what terrors hover!
If the truth he now discover,
Then his love for me is over,
Ah, whatever would he do?

Scene Eighteen

*Fiordiligi and Dorabella; Fernando and Guglielmo
with military cloaks and hats; Despina still in the
adjacent room; Don Alfonso*

Ferrando and Guglielmo

¹⁵ Joy once more now our sorrow replaces,
As again we behold the dear faces,
And we offer our tender embraces,
Thus fidelity reaps its reward.

Don Alfonso

Powers above us! Guglielmo! Ferrando!
This is marvellous! Here? Why though? And
wherefore?

Ferrando and Guglielmo

Sudden orders decreed our returning,
And the joyful intelligence learning,
Back we hastened with eagerness burning,
By our presence to end their alarms!

Guglielmo (*to Fiordiligi*)

Your complexion is pale, you are silent.

Ferrando (*to Dorabella*)

And your eye is bedewed with a tear!

Don Alfonso

| Now concealment is surely impossible.
| They are sad though their lovers are here!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella (*aside*)

Speak I dare not! My voice has deserted me.
How I tremble with shame and with fear!

(*The servants bring in a trunk.*)

Guglielmo

Let me put my pack and sabre
In the corner for a moment.
(*He goes out of the door through which Despina
went and returns immediately.*)
What the devil! A man in hiding.
He's a lawyer. How bizarre!

Despina (*entering hatless*)

It's no lawyer here in hiding,
See the mystery revealing.
From a masquerade returning
It's Despina you see here!
(*aside*)
Yes, it's me and where my equal
For contrivance will you see?

Ferrando and Guglielmo (*aside*)

It's Despina, now the sequel
Very quickly we shall see!

(*Don Alfonso cunningly lets fall the contract.*)

Fiordiligi and Dorabella (*aside*)

It's Despina, it's Despina
It's a mystery to me!

Don Alfonso (*sottovoce to the men*)

There's the contract if you need it.
Why not pick it up and read it?

Ferrando (*recovering the contract*)

What's this document I see here?

Guglielmo

It's a contract, yes, a contract!
It's a double marriage contract!

Ferrando and Guglielmo (*to the ladies*)

O ye gods, vain is denial,
For the signatures condemn you
Oh disgrace beyond conception!
Wicked treason and deception!
Let us find the hateful rivals!
Let our vengeance on them fall!

(*They move to go into the other room but the ladies
stop them.*)

Fiordiligi and Dorabella

Ah! My love, now let me perish,
Hope of life no more I cherish.
Shame, remorse and terror fill me.
With your sabre, unflinching, kill me!
Spare me not, I own it all!

Ferrando and Guglielmo

What is this?

Fiordiligi (*pointing at Don Alfonso and Despina*)

Ah! They can tell you!

Since through them this woe befell you!

Don Alfonso

It is useless to dissemble,

All the proof you need is there!

(He indicates the room which the suitors had previously entered, and Ferrando and Guglielmo go in.)

Fiordiligi and Dorabella (*aside*)

Oh, with fear I faint and palpitate.

Why did he his friends betray?

(Ferrando and Guglielmo, come out of the room without hats, cloaks and moustaches, but in Albanian costume; they tease their lovers and Despina in a ridiculous way.)

Ferrando (*paying exaggerated compliments to Fiordiligi*)

See here before you,

One who adores you

Your noble lover

From fair Albania!

Guglielmo (*to Dorabella, returning the miniature*)

See here a treasure,

Guarded with pleasure,

Yours in return, love,

Render to me.

Ferrando and Guglielmo

In its simplicity

This great invention,

This mighty mystery,

Was all our own.

Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Despina

Wonder on wonder!

Ferrando, Guglielmo and Don Alfonso

They are astounded!

Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Despina

Blunder on blunder!

Ferrando, Guglielmo and Don Alfonso

They are confounded!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella (*indicating Don Alfonso*)

Yet all our woes are due

To him alone.

Don Alfonso

True the plot was my invention

And completed my intention:

I desired but to persuade them

Nothing's perfect here below!

(He makes them unite and embrace.)

So forgiving, be united,

And above all else don't discuss it.

Now you all must laugh it off,

For there is nothing you can do.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella

Ah, my love, if you'll accept it

Far more faithful than vows I've broken

Is my penitence, believe me,

As my future life will show!

Ferrando and Guglielmo

I'll believe the word you've spoken,

To the proof no more I'll go.

Despina

The effect of my deception

Is beyond all comprehension

And indeed I've learned a lesson

With a moral that is true.

Take good care if fooling others

Someone else may well fool you.

Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Despina, Ferrando, Guglielmo and Don Alfonso

[16] Happy is the man who calmly

Takes life strictly as he finds it.

And with humour and patience only

Lets sweet reason be his guide.

Fortune's frown can ne'er confound him;

He will smile at all around him

And despite each new calamity

Happiness hath learnt to find.

Curtain

On session: Sir Peter Moores and Sir Charles Mackerras



On session: Sir Thomas Allen



On session

Clockwise from top left: Sir Charles Mackerras, Janice Watson, Diana Montague,
Lesley Garrett, Toby Spence, Sir Thomas Allen and Christopher Maltman



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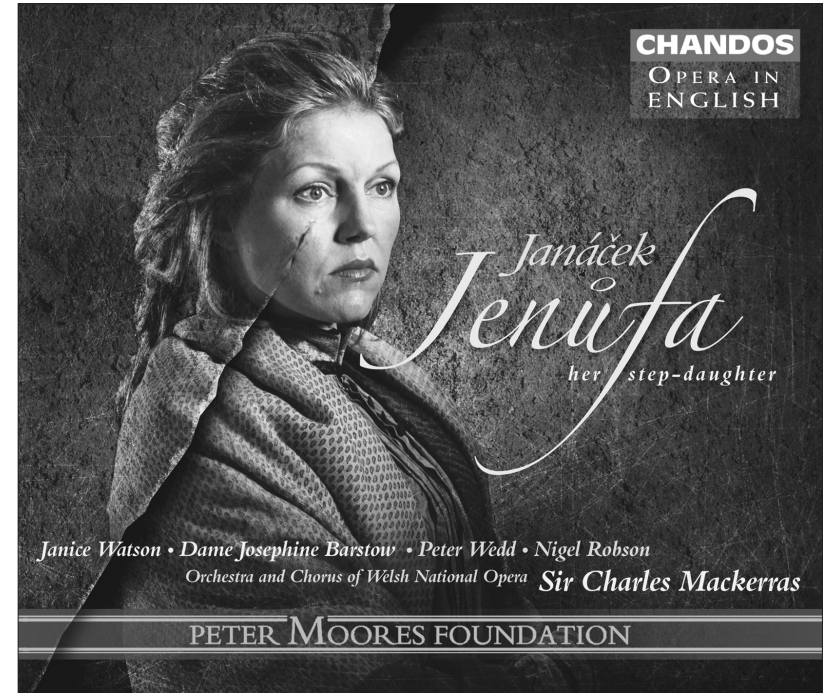
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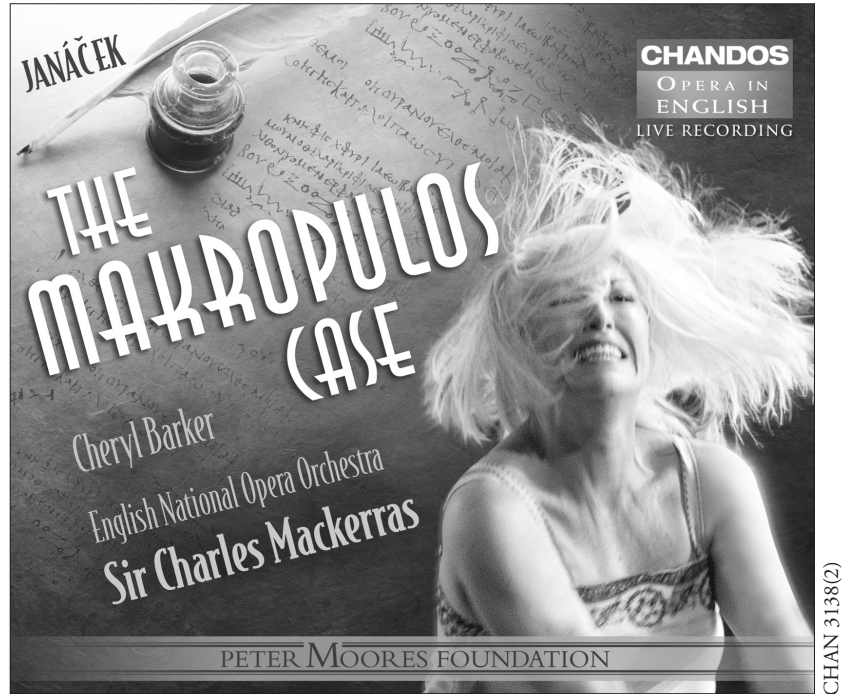
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Editor Classic Sound
Mastering Jonathan Cooper
Operas administrator Sue Shortridge
Recording venue Watford Colosseum; 3–6 and 8–11 January 2007,
and 15, 17, 18 & 20 August 2007
Front photo of Sir Charles Mackerras by Bill Cooper
Back cover session photo of Sir Charles Mackerras by Bill Cooper
Design and typesetting Cassidy Rayne Creative Ltd
Booklet editor Kara Reed
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CHAN 3152(3)

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Così fan tutte

or The School for Lovers

Opera buffa in two acts

Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte,

English version by Marmaduke Browne,

adapted by John Cox

Fiordiligi } ladies from Ferrara,
 Dorabella } sisters, living in Naples

Guglielmo, an officer, Fiordiligi's lover

Ferrando, an officer, Dorabella's lover

Despina, maidservant to Fiordiligi and Dorabella

Don Alfonso, an old philosopher

Janice Watson *soprano*Diana Montague *mezzo-soprano*Christopher Maltman *baritone*Toby Spence *tenor*Lesley Garrett *soprano*Sir Thomas Allen *baritone*

Geoffrey Mitchell Choir

Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

Sir Charles Mackerras

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