

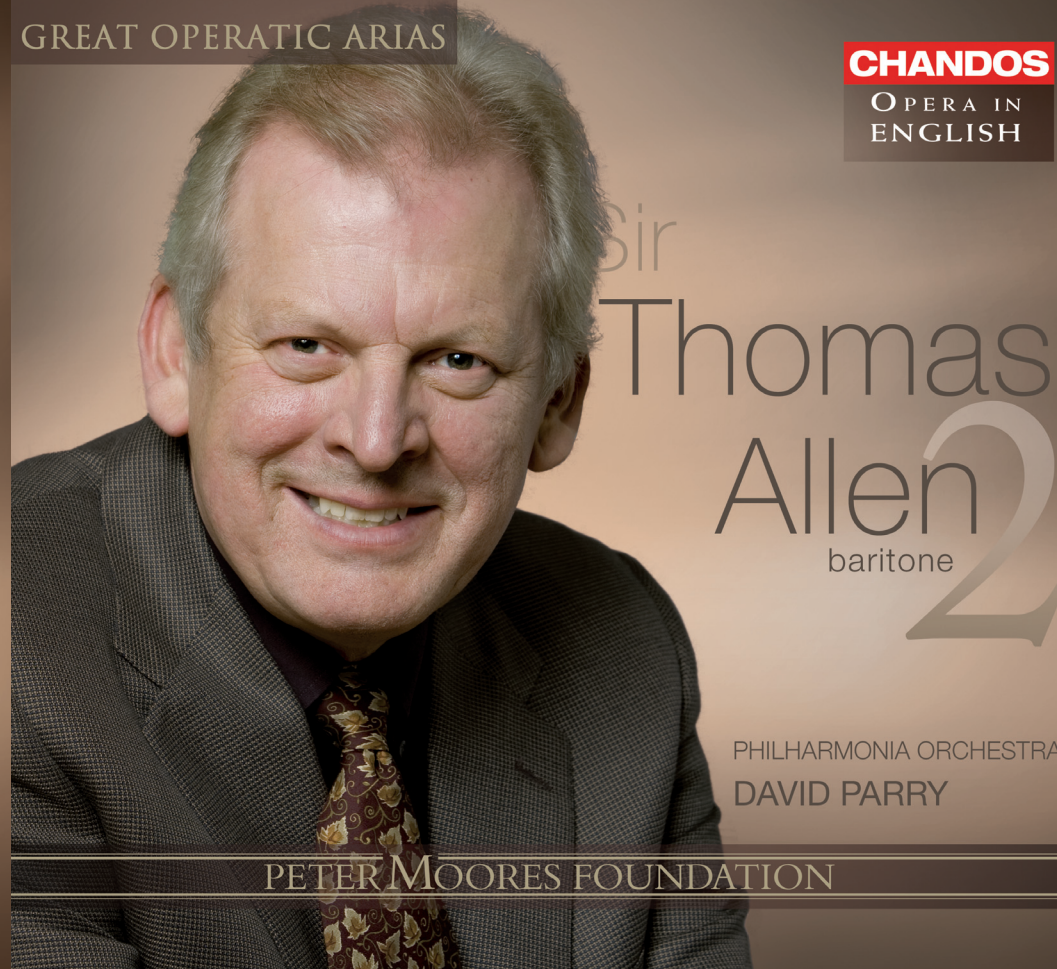


CHAN 3155

GREAT OPERATIC ARIAS

CHANDOS

OPERA IN
ENGLISH



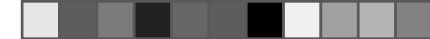
Sir
Thomas
Allen
baritone
2

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

DAVID PARRY

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION





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Great Operatic Arias with Sir Thomas Allen



	Time	Page
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) <i>from The Magic Flute</i>		
1 Papageno's Aria (Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja) 'I'm sure that there could never be'	2:52	[p. 56]
 <i>from The Marriage of Figaro</i>		
2 Figaro's Aria (Non più andrai) 'Here's an end to your life as a rover'	3:51	[p. 56]
 Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) <i>from Falstaff</i>		
3 Ford's Monologue (È sogno? O realtà...) 'I'm dreaming? Or is this true?'	4:37	[p. 57]
 <i>from Don Carlos</i>		
4 Don Carlos' and Rodrigo's Duet (Dio, che nell'alma infondere) 'Listen!' – 'God who has brought us together' with Gwyn Hughes Jones tenor • Philip Tebb bass Geoffrey Mitchell Choir	5:41	[p. 58]

	Time	Page
<i>from Macbeth</i>		
5 Macbeth's Scena and Aria (Perfidi! – Pietà, rispetto) 'Treachery!' – 'When you are old and full of tears'	5:16	[p. 59]
 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart <i>from Don Giovanni</i>		
6 Leporello's Catalogue Aria (Madamina) 'Little lady! Here's a list I've assembled'	5:38	[p. 60]
 <i>from The Marriage of Figaro</i>		
7 Figaro's Recitative and Cavatina (Se vuol ballare) 'Bravo, my lord and master' – 'So little master, you're dressed to go dancing'	3:30	[p. 60]
 Giuseppe Verdi <i>from La traviata</i> (The Fallen Woman)		
8 Recitative and Duet (Pura siccome un angelo) 'You are Violetta Valéry?' – 'I have a daughter sent from God' with Claire Rutter soprano	18:56	[p. 61]



	Time	Page
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart		
<i>from The Magic Flute</i>		
Pamina and Papageno's Duet (Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen)		
9	3:12	[p. 66]
with Susan Gritton soprano		
 <i>from Don Giovanni</i>		
Don Giovanni's Aria (Finch' han dal vino)		
10	1:29	[p. 66]
 <i>from Don Giovanni</i>		
Don Giovanni's Canzonetta (Deh, vieni alla finestra)		
11	2:20	[p. 67]
 Giuseppe Verdi		
<i>from Don Carlos</i>		
Prison Scene (Per me giunto è il dì supremo)		
12	12:13	[p. 67]
with Gwyn Hughes Jones tenor		

	Time	Page
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart		
<i>from The Magic Flute</i>		
Papagena and Papageno's Duet		
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with Susan Gritton soprano		
 Kurt Weill (1900–1950)		
<i>from Knickerbocker Holiday</i>		
14	4:04	[p. 70]
September Song		
 Philharmonia Orchestra		
Gareth Hancock assistant conductor		
David Parry		

Sir Thomas Allen as Germont père in
The Royal Opera's production of
La traviata



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Sir Thomas Allen in the title role of The Royal Opera's production of *Don Giovanni*



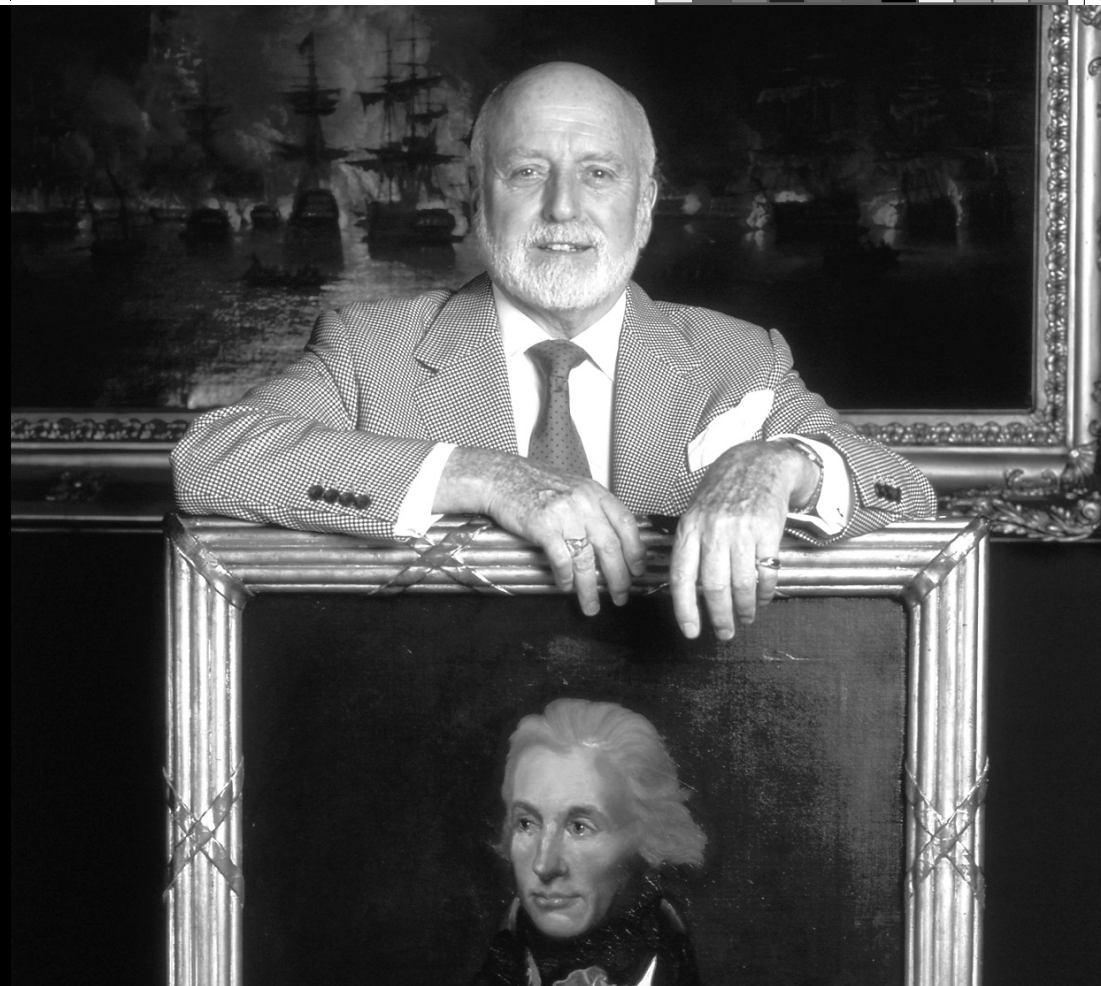
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Following his hugely popular first recital disc for Opera in English, Tom Allen here brings us fresh delights from his repertoire, mixing the less familiar with some of his 'benchmark' roles (Leporello as well as Don Giovanni and Papageno, Verdi's Ford and Rodrigo as well as Germont Père, Mozart's Figaro (rather than the Count)), plus a favourite by Weill. In all these pieces Tom demonstrates the musical versatility and love of language – especially his native English – that has made him a legendary communicator in song and opera throughout the world. A recording to relish!

Peter Moores

Sir Peter Moores, CBE, DL
March 2008

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





Great Operatic Arias

This recital by Sir Thomas Allen is one in a series, itself part of the steadily growing catalogue of opera in English, designed to focus on a particular type of voice, with the purpose of illustrating its character and exploring its repertoire. Here, the voice is the lyric baritone, and the programme concentrates on two composers whose work is central to it. Opera has now a 400-year-old history, bringing changes in styles, requirements and practices. Of all the male voices the baritone has probably remained the most constant, being nearest to the normal speaking voice. Even so, the expectations of composers have changed considerably, and singers have had to adapt. Between *The Magic Flute* (1791), Mozart's last comic masterpiece, and Verdi's *Falstaff* (1893) there lies little more than a century, but in respect of their requirements of the singing-voice the difference is profound.

In his scores, Mozart does not specify the baritone voice at all. *Don Giovanni*, for instance, has the male roles distributed between one tenor and four basses. That he had different kinds of voice in mind is clear, yet the dividing line between them often

seems thin. For instance, the 'baritone' role of Leporello will sometimes be taken by a real, full-time bass, as indeed will that of Don Giovanni himself. Similarly in *The Marriage of Figaro* a bass Figaro is by no means uncommon (the great Ezio Pinza and his successor Cesare Siepi, for example, sang the role frequently) and quite often the Figaro will be from that further intermediate category, the bass-baritone. The baritone himself is commonly thought of as an in-between voice anyway: we are trained to take that view of it by our choral tradition where the four-part music is for soprano, alto, tenor and bass. Officially our choirs have no baritones in their ranks. As we know, the reality is that some 'tenors' and most 'basses' are really baritones, encouraged to strain upwards or downwards as the case may be.

It is also fairly certain that your average bass-singing baritones in the choral society could, by amateur standards, make a reasonably successful attempt at the Mozart arias heard in this recital (and may even have Figaro's song for the young recruit as a well-tried party-piece), but they are unlikely to be on such friendly

terms with Verdi. The more probable outcome there is a sore throat. He may look over the pages of a Verdi score – the baritone part in the duet from *La traviata*, for instance – and see no note that, on a good day, lies beyond his compass; but what will tell is the frequency of the notes lying dangerously close to the top and the extent to which this baritone voice is expected to live happily in those regions. What has changed between Mozart and Verdi is, first, that the *tessitura* or 'lie' of a role has risen by a tone and perhaps more. Along with this comes the demand for additional power, resonance and dramatic force. The true Verdi baritone is almost as rare as the genuine bass and a good deal more so than the lighter varieties of tenor. Today, especially in Italy, once the main source, the supply appears to be running alarmingly low.

Mozart's original Figaro at Vienna in 1786 was the Italian Francesco Benucci, always described as a bass, sometimes with the addition *buffo* or comic. In a letter, Mozart reports his voice as 'exceptionally good', and that approval must have extended to a wider estimate of him as an artist, as he cast him as Leporello in the revised Vienna premiere of *Don Giovanni* in 1788 and as Guglielmo in the first *Così fan tutte* two years later. This raises

further questions of what kind of voice it was, for Guglielmo's music is relatively high, light and lyrical in vocal character while Leporello's is nearer the true bass (his stave always written below Giovanni's) and more that of a character-role.

Of the first Don Giovanni, Luigi Bassi, we have at least a description of the voice in 1800 as 'lying between tenor and bass' – and we note that the word 'baritone', though in its Latin form it dates back to the fifteenth century, appears not to have been thought of. Mozart heard him in Prague when still only twenty and singing Count Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro*: he had established himself over the previous two years as a well-liked artist. The premiere, then, gained an added distinction in the provision of a twenty-one-year-old Don Giovanni. In later years, Bassi would tell how Mozart would encourage his singers to improvise (with the condition that they also kept in touch with the orchestra), and that on Bassi's suggestion Mozart rewrote the Giovanni–Zerlina duet ('*La ci darem la mano*') as many as five times. In 1815 he sang his most famous role again, under the direction of Carl Maria von Weber.

Little is known about the original Leporello, Felice Ponziani, but Emanuel Schikaneder,



the first Papageno, remains so familiar as a name and so vivid a character as almost to need no annotation. He was the complete man of the theatre: writer, director, impresario, actor, dancer and, incidentally, singer. No doubt he invented the role of Papageno with a view to taking it himself and Mozart would have written music to suit his voice, keeping it within a comfortable range, placed in the middle register and limited in style so as not to demand skills such as only a trained opera singer would possess.

Verdi's singers being so much closer to us in time, we find them rather more fully documented. Of his baritones, the most famous and favoured of all, the French-born Victor Maurel, can even be heard on gramophone records singing solos from his two most famous Verdi 'creations', Iago in *Otello* (1887) and Falstaff (1893). He was much admired as a singing actor, and of his work on stage the records (made in 1907) give little idea. The voice itself appears never to have been considered remarkable for richness or volume nor in respect of an extensive upper range.

But then, Verdi – whose writing for baritone certainly requires these attributes – never seemed to be especially interested in them.

For his first Macbeth, Rigoletto and Germont père he chose the French–Italian Felice Varesi, whom he named 'the only artist at present in Italy who can take the part I am thinking of [Macbeth] by virtue of his singing style, his sensibility and also appearance'. In several letters Verdi gave him detailed instructions concerning the expressive, dramatic requirements, always stressing that the singer's first duty is towards the dramatist and his words. In the premiere of *La traviata* (1853) Varesi is sometimes reckoned to have contributed to the debacle, or at least to have taken something of an 'I told you so' attitude towards it. Apparently he considered himself poorly served, after his previous triumphs, by the role of the elder Germont. He measured the status of a role in arias, and found 'Di Provenza' and the cabaletta a poor allowance. To have a half-share in one of Verdi's finest duets was evidently small compensation.

Varesi's name is rarely heard nowadays. Jean-Baptiste Faure, the first Rodrigo in *Don Carlos*, and Antonio Pini-Corsi, who sang Ford in the premiere of *Falstaff*, are more often remembered, at least by record collectors, because Faure also wrote songs, such as 'Les Rameaux' and 'Crucifix' that were popular

with singers of Caruso's time, and Pini-Corsi became a prolific recording artist though only when his career had changed direction and he had become Italy's favourite *buffo*. Faure probably holds the record for baritone 'creations', which also included Nélusko in *L'Africaine* and the title-role in Thomas's *Hamlet* (1868). He was reputedly a very fine singer, with a voice of beautiful quality, evenly produced and intelligently used. If one is thinking of him as the 'creator' of the high-flying role of Verdi's Rodrigo, however, it may come as a surprise to learn that his favourite *cheveu de bataille* was Gounod's Mephistopheles, a speciality of basses.

One observation emerging from this brief survey of 'originals' is that, though remembered now for their associations with roles that go under the common heading of 'baritone', they were in fact remarkably varied. But then that is true also of our own programme; not that Gounod's Mephistopheles has a place in it, but it does include Leporello's Catalogue song (track [6]), favourite of a whole catalogue of basses from Chaliapin, Kipnis and Christoff to Samuel Ramey. With Ford's Monologue in *Falstaff* (track [2]), Sir Thomas extends his lyrical voice to encompass the more declamatory style of

late Verdi. And in the 'encore' piece, Kurt Weill's 'September Song' (track [14]), he extends it further, albeit in a different direction. The familiar melody, incidentally, has a not-so-familiar origin. It comes immediately from a show called *Knickerbocker Holiday* staged in New York in 1938. This borrowed from an unfinished satirical operetta, *Der Kubhandel* (1934), which had a short run at the Savoy Theatre, London, in 1935 adapted into English as *A Kingdom for a Cow*. The 'September Song' became famous through the original pre-war American recording by Walter Houston, so to our list of 'originals' should now be added that distinguished Hollywood veteran with his gravel voice of somewhat indeterminate pitch.

Finally, variety takes one other form in our programme. As in previous issues, the solos are interspersed with longer excerpts, duets and ensembles. Two purposes are served: the principal voice is heard, as in the operas, in combination with others, and the collection as a whole becomes more comprehensive. In *The Magic Flute*, Papageno the bird-catcher meets the heroine, Pamina, at a point where both are on their own and wish they were not (track [9]). Love between man and wife, they agree, is the ideal, which they contemplate

warmly but dispassionately. His other duet is one of sheer joy: Papageno has found his Papagena (track 13). In between both duets, Papageno, like Pamina, has to experience a dark hour in which death seems the only solution. She is saved from it by her lover, he by the Three Boys who speak the heaven-sent language of common sense and point out a timely remedy.

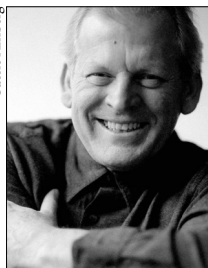
From Verdi's *La traviata* we have one of the finest in the great series of duets he wrote for baritone and soprano, often between father and daughter, here between Giorgio Germont and Violetta; one who appears as an enemy (though a father himself) and becomes a father-figure (track 8). Within the span of barely twenty minutes a complete reversal of fortune is brought about, the turning-point being a quiet single note on the resolution of which the vital and tragic decision is suspended.

In *Don Carlos* the baritone's duet partner is the tenor and, unusually for that combination, their voices are raised not in enmity but friendship. Their faith is pledged as they sing their soldierly prayer to the 'God who has brought us together' (track 4), and is tragically proved in the Prison scene when Rodrigo gives his life to allow Carlos his

freedom (track 12). The music Verdi wrote for Rodrigo in this scene is some of the most generous and full-hearted in his entire output. And, we note, he wrote it for the baritone. Public taste seems to have dictated that, in general, the hero should be a tenor; if Verdi had had his own way, he might at least as often have been a baritone.

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Susie Ahlberg



Born in Seaham, County Durham, Sir Thomas Allen 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; Yeletsky (*Pique Dame*), Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*) 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. The larger part of his repertoire has been extensively recorded with such distinguished names as Georg Solti, James Levine, Neville Marriner, Bernard Haitink, Sir Simon Rattle, Wolfgang Sawallisch and Riccardo Muti.

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. His many honours include the title of Bayerischer Kammersänger awarded by the Bayerische Staatsoper, Honorary Membership of the Royal Academy of Music, Prince Consort Professor of the Royal College of Music, the Hambro Visiting Professorship of Opera Studies at Oxford University, Fellowship of Jesus College Oxford, Fellowship of the Royal College of Music, Fellowship of the University of Sunderland, M.A. from Newcastle University and D.Mus. from Durham University. 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.

One of the world's great orchestras, the **Philharmonia Orchestra** is now in its eleventh season with renowned German maestro Christoph von Dohnányi as Principal Conductor. That post was first held by Otto Klemperer, and the Orchestra has since had important collaborations with Lorin Maazel (as Associate Principal Conductor), Riccardo Muti (as Principal Conductor and Music Director), Giuseppe Sinopoli (as Music Director) and, currently, Kurt Sanderling (as Conductor Emeritus), Vladimir Ashkenazy (as Conductor Laureate) and Sir Charles Mackerras (as Principal Guest Conductor), besides such eminent figures as Wilhelm Furtwängler, Richard Strauss, Arturo Toscanini, Guido

Cantelli, Herbert von Karajan and Carlo Maria Giulini. It continues to engage world-class conductors and soloists, and attracts Europe's most talented young players to join its orchestral ranks.

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

An increasing number of the Orchestra's concerts are being broadcast by BBC Radio 3, including its annual performance at the BBC Proms. As the world's most recorded symphony orchestra, with over 1000 releases to its credit, among these a number of television and feature film soundtracks, the Philharmonia Orchestra enjoys a worldwide reputation. The discography includes, for Opera Rara, several recital discs as well as numerous complete operas, and for Chandos, in the Opera in English series sponsored by the Peter Moores Foundation, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Thieving Magpie*,

Wozzeck, *Don Giovanni*, *The Elixir of Love*, *Lucia of Lammermoor*, *Faust*, *Carmen*, *Aida*, *La Bohème*, *Madam Butterfly*, *Turandot*, the award-winning *Tosca* and solo recital albums of operatic arias with Bruce Ford, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny and John Tomlinson. The Philharmonia Orchestra continues to consolidate its international renown through regular tours and through prestigious residencies at the Châtelet Théâtre Musical in Paris, the Megaron in Athens and the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York.



David Parry studied with Sergiu Celibidache and began his career as Sir John Pritchard's assistant. He made his debut with English Music Theatre, then became a staff conductor at Städtische Bühnen, Dortmund and at Opera North. He was Music Director of Opera 80 from 1983 to 1987 Opera North and appears regularly with the Philharmonia and London Philharmonic Orchestras. In 1996 he made his debut at the Glyndebourne Festival

conducting *Così fan tutte*, following it in 1998 with the world premiere of Jonathan Dove's *Flight*.

He is a frequent visitor to Spain where he has given concerts with most of the major Spanish orchestras. He conducted the Spanish premiere of *Peter Grimes* in Madrid and in 1996 the first Spanish production of *The Rake's Progress*. He has appeared in Germany, Switzerland, and The Netherlands, at the Pesaro Festival in Italy, the Hong Kong International Festival, in Japan with a tour of *Carmen*, and in Mexico with the UNAM Symphony Orchestra. Recent new productions he has conducted include *Fidelio* at the New Zealand Festival, *Lucia di Lammermoor* at New Israeli Opera and *Don Giovanni* at Staatsoper Hannover.

His work in the recording studio includes the BBC Television production of Marschner's *Der Vampyr* and more than thirty complete opera recordings under the sponsorship of the Peter Moores Foundation. Among these are numerous discs for the Opera Rara label which have won several awards, including the Belgian Prix Cecilia for Donizetti's *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*. For Chandos he has conducted a series of recitals of operatic arias – with Sir Thomas Allen, Jennifer Larmore, Bruce

Ford, Alan Opie, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny, John Tomlinson, Barry Banks, Della Jones and Andrew Shore – as well as *Nabucco*, *Fidelio*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *A Masked Ball*, *Idomeneo*, *Carmen*, *The Thieving Magpie*, *Don Giovanni*,

Don Pasquale, *The Elixir of Love*, *Lucia of Lammermoor*, *Ernani*, *Il trovatore*, *Aida*, *Faust*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *La Bohème*, *Turandot*, the award-winning *Tosca* and highlights from *Der Rosenkavalier*, all in association with the Peter Moores Foundation.

Sir Thomas Allen in the title role of The Royal Opera's production of *Don Giovanni*



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PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

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

Sir Peter's philanthropic work began with his passion for opera: in his twenties he helped a number of young artists in the crucial, early stages of their careers, several of whom – Dame Joan Sutherland, Sir Colin Davis and the late Sir Geraint Evans amongst them – became world-famous.

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

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

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

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

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

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

He received the Gold Medal of the Italian Republic in 1974, an Honorary MA from Christ Church, Oxford, in 1975, and was made an Honorary Member of the Royal Northern College of Music in 1985. In 1992 he was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire by HM the Queen. He was appointed CBE in 1991 and received a Knighthood in 2003 for his charitable services to the arts.



Große Opernarien

Dieses Recital von Thomas Allen gehört zu einer Serie von Opern-Recitals, die – selbst wiederum Teil der ständig wachsenden Reihe von Opern in englischer Sprache – so disponiert ist, dass jede Ausgabe sich einem eigenen Stimmentyp widmet in der Absicht, dessen spezifischen Charakter vorzustellen und zugleich sein Repertoire zu erkunden. Hier ist es der lyrische Bariton, und das Programm konzentriert sich auf zwei Komponisten, deren Oeuvre für diese Stimmelage von zentraler Bedeutung ist. Die Gattung der Oper kann heute auf eine vierhundertjährige Geschichte zurückblicken und in dieser Zeit haben sich Stile, Anforderungen und Techniken gewandelt. Von allen männlichen Stimmen ist der Bariton wohl am konstantesten geblieben, da er der normalen Sprechstimme am nächsten kommt. Trotzdem haben sich die Erwartungen an den Komponisten wesentlich gewandelt, und die Sänger haben sich entsprechend umgewöhnen müssen. Zwischen der *Zauberflöte* (1791), Mozarts letztem komischen Meisterwerk, und Verdis *Falstaff* (1893) liegt wenig mehr als ein Jahrhundert, doch in Bezug auf die jeweiligen Anforderungen an die Singstimme bestehen

tiefgreifende Unterschiede.

In Mozarts Werken wird der Bariton nirgendwo spezifisch genannt. *Don Giovanni* zum Beispiel verteilt die männlichen Rollen auf einen Tenor und vier Bässe. Dass damit unterschiedliche Stimmentypen gemeint sind, ist offensichtlich, doch ist dieser Unterschied nicht so groß; häufig singen professionelle Bassisten die Rolle des Leporello und manchmal sogar die von Don Giovanni selbst. Ähnlich ist in der *Hochzeit des Figaro* die Verwendung einer Bassstimme für den Figaro alles andere als ungewöhnlich (so sangen zum Beispiel der große Ezio Pinza und dessen Nachfolger Cesare Siepi häufig diese Rolle) und oft wird für diese Partie auch eine weitere Zwischenkategorie gewählt – die des Bass-Baritons. Der Bariton selbst wird ebenfalls häufig für eine Zwischenlage gehalten; zu dieser Ansicht zwingt uns unsere Chortradition, wo der vierstimmige Satz auf Sopran, Alt, Tenor und Bass verteilt ist. Offiziell haben unsere Chöre keine Baritone in ihren Rängen. Wie wir wissen, gestaltet sich die Realität aber so, dass einige “Tenöre” und die meisten “Bässe” eigentlich Baritone sind,

die sich je nach Lage der Dinge nach oben oder nach unten strecken müssen.

Auch kann als ziemlich sicher gelten, dass der durchschnittliche Bariton, der im Chorverein den Bass singt, an den Ansprüchen eines Amateurs gemessen die in diesem Recital zu Gehör gebrachten Mozart-Arien durchaus erfolgreich bewältigen würde (und er mag Figaros Lied für den jungen Rekruten als erprobtes Partystück in seinem persönlichen Repertoire haben); mit Verdi wird er jedoch kaum auf solch vertrautem Fuß stehen. Hier könnte er sich höchstens eine wunde Kehle holen. Er mag die Seiten einer Komposition von Verdi durchblättern – etwa die Baritonstimme in dem Duett aus *La traviata* – und dabei keine einzige Note finden, die an einem guten Tag seinen Stimmumfang überschreitet; aber die Tücke liegt in der Häufung der gefährlich hoch liegenden Noten und darin, wie sehr von dieser Baritonstimme erwartet wird, dass sie sich in diesen Regionen dauerhaft aufhält. Was sich zwischen Mozart und Verdi geändert hat, ist zum einen, dass die “Tessitura” oder “Lage” der Rollen um mindestens einen Ton angestiegen ist. Hinzu kommt, dass heute größere Stimmstärke, Resonanz und dramatische Kraft erwartet werden. Der echte Verdi-Bariton

ist fast so selten wie der genuine Bass und wesentlich rarer als die leichteren Spielarten des Tenors. Vor allem in Italien, früher die Domäne dieser Stimmelage, ist der Nachwuchs heute alarmierend selten geworden.

Mozarts erster Figaro war 1786 in Wien der Italiener Francesco Benucci, der immer als Bass beschrieben worden ist – gelegentlich mit dem Zusatz *buffo* oder komisch. Mozart charakterisiert seine Stimme in einem Brief als “außergewöhnlich gut”, und diese Zustimmung muss sich auch allgemein auf Benuccis künstlerische Qualitäten bezogen haben, da er ihm 1788 auch die Rolle des Leporello in der überarbeiteten Wiener Premiere von *Don Giovanni* und zwei Jahre später die des Guglielmo in der ersten Inszenierung von *Così fan tutte* antrug. Dies führt zu der Frage, um was für eine Stimme es sich genau handelte, denn Guglielmos Partie ist recht hoch und seine Stimme von leichter, lyrischer Qualität, während Leporellos Stimme sich dem typischen Bass annähert (seine Notenzeile liegt immer unter der von Don Giovanni) und es sich hier eher um eine Charakterrolle handelt.

Vom ersten Don Giovanni, Luigi Bassi, haben wir zumindest eine aus dem Jahr 1800 stammende Beschreibung seiner Stimme als



“zwischen Tenor und Bass liegend”; zugleich fällt auf, dass das Wort “Bariton”, obwohl es sich in seiner lateinischen Form bis ins 15. Jahrhundert zurückverfolgen lässt, hier keine Erwähnung findet. Mozart hörte Bassi in Prag, als dieser erst zwanzig Jahre alt war und bereits den Grafen Almaviva in der *Hochzeit des Figaro* sang; er hatte sich innerhalb von nur zwei Jahren als Künstler einen Namen gemacht. Die Premiere fand daher noch zusätzlich Beachtung, weil Don Giovanni von einem 21-jährigen gesungen wurde. Später sollte Bassi erzählen, wie Mozart seine Sänger zum Improvisieren ermutigte (solange sie mit dem Orchester harmonierten) und dass er auf Bassis Vorschlag hin das Duett zwischen Giovanni und Zerlina (“Là ci darem la mano”) nicht weniger als fünfmal umschrieb. 1815 sang er seine berühmteste Rolle ein weiteres Mal, diesmal unter der Leitung von Carl Maria von Weber.

Über den ersten Leporello, Felice Ponziani, ist kaum etwas bekannt; Emanuel Schikaneder hingegen, der erste Papageno, ist heute noch ein so geläufiger Name und eine so lebhaft gegenwärtige Persönlichkeit, dass er kaum des Kommentars bedarf. Er war in jeder Hinsicht ein Mann des Theaters – Autor, Direktor, Impresario, Schauspieler, Tänzer

und gelegentlich auch Sänger. Zweifellos schuf er die Rolle des Papageno schon in der Absicht, sie auch selbst zu übernehmen, und Mozart vertonte sie dann sicherlich so, dass sie zu seiner Stimme passte – mit einem leicht zu bewältigenden Stimmumfang im mittleren Register und auch stilistisch eher beschränkt, um keine Fertigkeiten zu verlangen, die nur ein ausgebildeter Opernsänger besaß.

Verdis Sänger stehen uns zeitlich wesentlich näher und sind entsprechend auch viel besser dokumentiert. Der berühmteste und beliebteste unter seinen Bariton, der aus Frankreich gebürtige Victor Maurel, ist sogar bereits auf Grammophon-Platten zu hören, auf denen er Soli aus seinen beiden berühmtesten Verdi-“Schöpfungen” singt – den Iago aus *Otello* (1887) und die Titelrolle aus *Falstaff* (1893). Maurel wurde besonders als singender Schauspieler verehrt, und die Aufnahmen von seiner Arbeit auf der Bühne (aus dem Jahr 1907) vermitteln kaum einen adäquaten Eindruck. Die Stimme selbst scheint weder von ihrem Timbre noch von ihrem Volumen her für besonders bemerkenswert gehalten worden zu sein, und auch ihr oberer Stimmumfang war keinesfalls außergewöhnlich.

Allerdings scheint Verdi an diesen Qualitäten auch nicht besonders interessiert gewesen

zu sein – obwohl seine Musik für Bariton diese eindeutig voraussetzt. Als seinen ersten Macbeth, Rigoletto und Germont père wählte er den Franco-Italiener Felice Varesi, von dem er behauptete, er sei “gegenwärtig der einzige Künstler in Italien, der von seinem Gesangsstil, seiner Empfindsamkeit und auch von seiner Erscheinung her die Rolle, die ich vor Augen habe [die des Macbeth], verkörpern kann”. Verdi gab ihm in einer Reihe von Briefen detaillierte Anweisungen über die expressiv-dramatischen Anforderungen der Rolle, wobei er immer wieder betonte, dass der Sänger vor allem anderen dem Dramatiker und seinem Text verpflichtet sei. Gelegentlich wird Varesi vorgeworfen, er habe zu dem Debakel der Premiere von *La traviata* (1853) einiges beigetragen oder zumindest dem Werk gegenüber eine abwertende Haltung eingenommen. Anscheinend hielt er angesichts seiner früheren Triumphe die Rolle des älteren Germont für seiner unwürdig. Er maß den Status einer Rolle an der Zahl der Arien und fand “Di Provenza” und die Cabaletta in dieser Hinsicht unzureichend. An einem der schönsten Duette Verdis teilzuhaben war ihm anscheinend nicht Kompensation genug.

Den Namen Varesi hört man heute nur noch selten. Jean-Baptiste Faure, der erste Rodrigo

in *Don Carlos*, und Antonio Pini-Corsi, der in der Premiere von *Falstaff* den Ford sang, sind uns noch eher im Gedächtnis – zumindest erinnern sich Plattensammler an sie, denn Faure schrieb auch Lieder, so etwa “Les Rameaux” und “Crucifix”, die von Sängern der Ära Caruso geschätzt wurden, und Pini-Corsi machte zahlreiche Aufnahmen, allerdings erst nachdem er die Richtung seiner Laufbahn geändert hatte und der beliebteste *buffo* Italiens geworden war. Faure ist wahrscheinlich der Bariton, der die meisten Rollen “geschaffen” hat, darunter Nélusko in *L'Africaine* und die Titelrolle in Thomas’ *Hamlet* (1868). Er soll ein ausgezeichnete Sänger gewesen sein, mit einer Stimme von hoher Qualität, die er mit Gleichmaß und Intelligenz einsetzte. Wenn man an ihn aber vor allem als an den “Schöpfer” von Verdis Rodrigo denkt, mag man überrascht sein zu erfahren, dass sein bevorzugtes *cheveu de bataille* Gounods Mephistopheles war.

Eine aus diesem kurzen Überblick der Premierensänger erwachsende Beobachtung ist, dass, obwohl diese mit Rollen in Verbindung gebracht wurden, die allgemein unter die Rubrik “Bariton” fallen, sie doch eigentlich bemerkenswert unterschiedlich waren. Dies trifft allerdings auch auf unser hier vorgestelltes Programm zu; Gounods Mephistopheles



gehört zwar nicht dazu, wohl aber Leporellos Katalogarie (Band [5]), der Favorit einer ganzen Reihe von Bässen, die von Chaliapin über Kipnis und Christoff bis hin zu Samuel Ramey reichen. Mit Fords Monolog in *Falstaff* (Band [3]) erweitert Sir Thomas seine lyrische Stimme, um auch den eher deklamatorischen Stil des späten Verdi zu bedienen. Und in der “Zugabe”, Kurt Weills “Septemberlied” (Band [14]) erweitert er sie noch einmal, allerdings in einer ganz anderen Richtung. Diese allgemein bekannte Melodie hat übrigens einen gar nicht so bekannten Ursprung. Sie ist direkt der 1938 in New York inszenierten Show *Knickerbocker Holiday* entnommen. Diese hatte wiederum eine unvollendete satirische Operette mit dem Titel *Der Kuhhandel* (1934) beliehen, welche – in die englische Sprache übertragen – 1935 als *A Kingdom for a Cow* im Londoner Savoy Theatre eine kurze Laufzeit hatte. Das “Septemberlied” wurde in seiner ursprünglichen amerikanischen Vorkriegsaufnahme berühmt, und zu unserer Liste von Premierensängern gesellt sich nun noch der fast stimmlose (doch eben darum unvergessliche) Walter Houston.

Schließlich gibt es in unserem Programm noch eine andere Art von Abwechslung. Wie schon in früheren Ausgaben dieser Reihe

wechseln die Soli mit längeren Auszügen, Duetten und Ensembles ab. Damit werden zweierlei Absichten verfolgt: Zum einen ist die hier vorgestellte Stimme genau wie in der Oper im Wechselspiel mit anderen zu hören, zum anderen wird die Sammlung in ihrer Gesamtheit verständlicher. In der *Zauberflöte* trifft Papageno der Vogelfänger die Heldin Pamina zu einem Zeitpunkt, als sie beide allein sind, aber eigentlich nicht allein sein möchten (Band [9]). Die Liebe zwischen Mann und Frau, so finden sie beide, ist das Ideal, das sie warmherzig, doch ohne Leidenschaft kontemplieren. Sein zweites Duett ist von reinster Freude erfüllt: Papageno hat seine Papagena gefunden (Band [13]). Zwischen diesen beiden Duetten muss Papageno – wie auch Pamina – eine dunkle Stunde durchleben, in der der Tod die einzige Lösung zu sein scheint. Pamina wird von ihrem Geliebten gerettet, Papageno von den drei Knaben, die die vom Himmel gesandte Sprache der Vernunft sprechen und rechtzeitig eine Lösung andeuten.

Von Verdis *La traviata* haben wir zunächst eines der schönsten in der langen Reihe von Duetten, die der Komponist für Bariton und Sopran schrieb – häufig für Vater und Tochter, hier für Germont père und Violetta, einen, der als Feind erscheint (obwohl auch er Vater ist)

und zur Vaterfigur wird (Band [8]). Innerhalb von nur knapp zwanzig Minuten wendet sich das Schicksal jedoch, wobei der Wendepunkt aus einer einzigen leisen Note besteht, von deren Auflösung die lebenswichtige und zugleich tragische Entscheidung abhängt. In *Don Carlos* ist der Duettpartner des Bariton der Tenor; dieses Mal aber erheben sich die beiden Stimmen nicht, wie in dieser Kombination üblich, in Feindschaft sondern freundschaftlich. Sie leisten ihren gegenseitigen Treueschwur, indem sie ihr soldatisches Gebet an den “Gott, der uns zusammengebracht” singen (Band [4]); dieser Schwur wird in der Gefängniszene in tragischer Weise erfüllt – Rodrigo opfert sein Leben, damit Carlos die Freiheit gewinnt (Band [12]). Die Musik, die Verdi in dieser Szene für Rodrigo schrieb, zählt zu dem Menschlichsten und Empfindungsreichsten, das er je geschrieben hat. Und wie wir sehen, schrieb er diese Musik für Bariton. Der Publikumsgeschmack scheint diktiert zu haben, dass der Held gewöhnlich ein Tenor sein sollte; es will jedoch scheinen, als wäre er mindestens ebenso häufig ein Bariton gewesen, hätte Verdi nur seinen Vorlieben folgen können.

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Übersetzung: Stephanie Wollny

Sir Thomas Allen wurde in Seaham (County Durham) geboren und gab sein Debüt als Berufssänger an der Welsh National Opera. Heute ist er an allen großen Opernhäusern der Welt etabliert. Alleine an der Royal Opera Covent Garden, wo er 2006 sein fünfunddreißigjähriges Jubiläum feierte, hat er mehr als vierzig Rollen verkörpert. 2006 beging er auch sein fünfundzwanzigjähriges Jubiläum an der Metropolitan Opera New York. Von der Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera und Los Angeles Opera, der Bayerischen Staatsoper und der Mailänder Scala, den Salzburger Festspielen und dem Glyndebourne Festival ist er nicht fortzudenken.

Besonders berühmt ist er für Leibrollen wie Billy Budd, Pelléas, Eugen Onegin, Ulisse und Beckmesser sowie die großen Mozart-Partien des Grafen Almaviva, Don Alfonso, Papageno, Guglielmo und natürlich Don Giovanni. Unlängst war er u.a. Eisenstein (*Die Fledermaus*), Don Alfonso, Ulisse und Don Giovanni an der Bayerischen Staatsoper, Jeletski (*Pique Dame*), Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*) und *Sweeney Todd* an der Royal Opera Covent Garden, Eisenstein beim Glyndebourne Festival, Don Alfonso bei den Salzburger Oster- und Sommerfestspielen,



Förster (*Das schlaue Fuchslein*) an der San Francisco Opera und Beckmesser und Don Alfonso an der Metropolitan Opera New York.

Als ebenso berühmter Konzertkünstler tritt er regelmäßig in ganz Europa, Australien und Amerika auf, gemeinsam mit den großen Orchestern und Dirigenten der Welt. Den größten Teil seines Repertoires hat er mit Spitzendirigenten wie Georg Solti, James Levine, Neville Marriner, Bernard Haitink, Sir Simon Rattle, Wolfgang Sawallisch und Riccardo Muti auf Schallplatte aufgenommen.

Thomas Allens erstes Buch, *Foreign Parts – A Singer's Journal*, wurde 1993 veröffentlicht, und in 2003 mit *Albert Herring* hat er am Royal College of Music einen triumphalen Einstand als Regisseur gefeiert. Er hat auch Don Giovanni und Così fan tutte at der Sage, Gateshead regiert. Neben vielen anderen Ehrungen trägt er den Titel eines Bayerischen Kammersängers, er ist Ehrenmitglied der Royal Academy of Music, Prince Consort Professor am Royal College of Music, Hambro Gastprofessor für Opernstudien an der Universität Oxford, Fellow am Jesus College Oxford, am Royal College of Music und an der Universität Sunderland, Ehrenmagister der Universität Newcastle und Ehrendoktor der

Universität Durham. 1989 erhielt er den britischen Verdienstorden CBE, und 1999 wurde er von Königin Elizabeth II. in den Adelsstand erhoben.

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.

Das **Philharmonia Orchestra**, eines der großen Orchester der Welt, steht nun

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

Das Philharmonia Orchestra ist in der Royal Festival Hall ansässig und nimmt eine zentrale Position im Musikleben Großbritanniens ein, nicht nur durch seine Londoner Konzerte, sondern auch durch feste Kontakte mit Aufführungsstätten in anderen Teilen des Landes, die eine ideale Gelegenheit für die Erweiterung seines dynamischen und bevölkerungsnahen musikpädagogischen Programms bieten. Das Orchester ist mit

zahlreichen Preisen ausgezeichnet worden und hat beispiellose kritische Unterstützung für seine innovative Programmpolitik gewonnen, die in ihrem Kern der Bestellung und Darbietung neuer Musik von führenden Komponisten unserer Zeit verpflichtet ist.

Die Konzerte des Orchesters werden immer häufiger von BBC Radio 3 übertragen, nicht zuletzt im Rahmen der jährlichen BBC Proms. Mit über 1000 Schallplattenaufnahmen verfügt das Philharmonia Orchestra über die größte Orchesterdiskographie der Welt, die auch Fernseh- und Filmmusik beinhaltet, und genießt weltweit höchstes Ansehen. Das Orchester hat für Opera Rara mehrere Recitals sowie dreizehn komplette Opern eingespielt und in der Reihe "Opera in English" für Chandos mit Unterstützung durch die Peter Moores Foundation *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Thieving Magpie*, *Wozzeck*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Elixir of Love*, *Lucia of Lammermoor*, *Faust*, *Carmen*, *Aida*, *La Bohème*, *Madam Butterfly*, *Turandot*, die preisgekrönte *Tosca* und Opernarien in Solorecitals mit Bruce Ford, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny und John Tomlinson aufgenommen. Das Philharmonia Orchestra untermauert



seinen internationalen Rang durch regelmäßige Tournen und Gastauftritte an berühmten Häusern wie dem Châtelet Théâtre Musical in Paris, dem Megaron in Athen und dem Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York.

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

Er übt in Großbritannien und international eine weitgespannte Tätigkeit in den Bereichen Oper und Konzert aus, hat mehrere Produktionen der English National Opera und der Opera North dirigiert und tritt regelmäßig mit dem Philharmonia Orchestra und dem London Philharmonic Orchestra auf. 1996 gab er sein Debüt beim Glyndebourne Festival mit *Così fan tutte* und hat dort 1998 die Uraufführung von Jonathan Doves *Flight* geleitet.

Er ist häufig in Spanien zu Gast und hat mit den meisten bedeutenden spanischen

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

Seine Tätigkeit im Aufnahmestudio umfaßt die Produktion von Marschners *Der Vampyr* fürs BBC-Fernsehen und achtundzwanzig vollständige Opernaufzeichnungen unter der Schirmherrschaft der Peter Moores Foundation. Darunter befinden sich zahlreiche Aufnahmen der Reihe Opera Rara, die mehrere Preise gewonnen haben, beispielsweise den belgischen Prix Cecilia für Donizettis *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*. Für Chandos hat er die Aufzeichnung einer Serie von Programmen mit Opernarien geleitet (mit Sir Thoms Allen, Jennifer Larmore, Bruce Ford, Alan Opie, Diana Montague, Dennis

O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny, John Tomlinson, Barry Banks, Della Jones und Andrew Shore), außerdem *Nabucco*, *Fidelio*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *A Masked Ball*, *Idomeneo*, *Carmen*, *The Thieving Magpie*, *Don Giovanni*, *Don Pasquale*,

The Elixir of Love, *Lucia of Lammermoor*, *Ernani*, *Il trovatore*, *Aida*, *Faust*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *La Bohème*, *Turandot*, die preisgekrönte *Tosca* und Highlights aus dem *Rosenkavalier*, jeweils in Zusammenarbeit mit der Peter Moores Foundation.

On session: Sir Thomas Allen and Susan Gritton



On session: Sir Thomas Allen





Grands airs d'opéra

Ce récital de Sir Thomas Allen est l'un d'une série faisant partie d'un catalogue grandissant d'opéras chantés en anglais, et destinée à mettre l'accent sur une voix spécifique dans le but d'illustrer son caractère et d'explorer son répertoire. Ici, la voix est celle du baryton lyrique, et le programme se concentre sur deux compositeurs dont l'œuvre lui est centrale. L'opéra possède aujourd'hui une histoire de quatre cents ans, apportant des changements sur le plan du style, des exigences et des pratiques. De toutes les voix d'homme, celle de baryton est probablement la plus constante puisqu'elle est la plus proche de la voix parlée normale. Malgré cela, les attentes des compositeurs ont considérablement changé, et les chanteurs ont dû s'adapter. La distance entre *Die Zauberflöte* (1791), le dernier chef-d'œuvre comique de Mozart, et *Falstaff* de Verdi (1893) est d'à peine plus d'un siècle, mais sur le plan de ce qu'ils exigent de la voix, la différence est profonde.

Dans ses partitions, Mozart ne mentionne nulle part la voix de baryton. *Don Giovanni*, par exemple, distribue les rôles masculins entre un ténor et quatre basses. Il est clair que le

compositeur avait à l'esprit différents types de voix, mais la distinction n'est pas grande au point que les véritables basses à plein temps ne puissent chanter souvent le rôle de Leporello et parfois celui de Don Giovanni. De la même manière, il n'est pas rare qu'une basse tienne le rôle de Figaro dans *Le nozze di Figaro* (le grand Ezio Pinza et son successeur Cesare Siepi, par exemple, chantèrent fréquemment ce rôle), et très souvent le Figaro appartient à cette catégorie intermédiaire, le basse-baryton. Le baryton est communément considéré comme une voix intermédiaire: nous sommes habitués à accepter cette notion en raison de notre tradition chorale dans laquelle la musique à quatre parties est écrite pour soprano, alto, ténor et basse. Officiellement, nos chorales n'ont pas de baryton parmi leurs rangs. La réalité est que certains "ténors" et la plupart des "basses" sont en fait des barytons, encouragés à pousser leur registre vers le haut ou vers le bas selon le cas.

Il est également à peu près certain que le baryton moyen tenant la partie de basse de nos sociétés chorales pourrait, à un niveau amateur, essayer de manière raisonnablement

satisfaisante les arias de Mozart enregistrées dans ce récital (voire l'air de Figaro pour le jeune nouveau membre comme numéro bien répété), mais il y a peu de chance qu'il serait en aussi bons termes avec Verdi. Le résultat le plus probable dans ce cas serait un mal de gorge. Il peut consulter les pages d'une partition de Verdi – la partie de baryton dans le duo de *La traviata*, par exemple – et constater qu'aucune note ne dépasse son étendue vocale (un jour de forme); mais ce qui apparaîtra est la fréquence des notes se trouvant dangereusement près du registre aigu, et le degré auquel cette voix de baryton est supposée être parfaitement à l'aise dans ces régions. Ce qui a changé entre Mozart et Verdi est, premièrement, que la tessiture du rôle s'est élevée d'un ton et peut-être davantage. À cela s'ajoute l'exigence d'une puissance, d'une résonance et d'une force dramatique supplémentaires. Le vrai baryton verdien est presque aussi rare qu'une basse authentique et encore plus que les variétés de ténors plus légers. Aujourd'hui, en particulier en Italie, autrefois la source principale, le nombre de barytons semble diminuer de manière inquiétante.

Le Figaro original de Mozart à Vienne en 1786 était l'Italien Francesco Benucci,

toujours décrit comme une basse avec parfois l'addition *buffo* ou comique. Dans une de ses lettres, Mozart mentionne que sa voix est "exceptionnellement bonne", et ce compliment devait s'étendre à une plus grande estime de ses qualités d'artiste puisqu'il lui confia le rôle de Leporello lors de la première de la version révisée de *Don Giovanni* à Vienne en 1788 et celui de Guglielmo lors de la création de *Così fan tutte* deux ans plus tard. Ceci appelle d'autres questions concernant le type de sa voix, car la musique de Guglielmo est relativement élevée, légère et lyrique sur le plan du caractère vocal, tandis que celle de Leporello est plus proche d'une véritable basse (sa portée est toujours écrite sous celle de Don Giovanni) et davantage dans l'esprit d'un rôle de composition.

On possède une description de la voix du premier Don Giovanni, Luigi Bassi, datant de 1800 comme étant "placée entre ténor et basse", et on notera que le terme de "baryton", qui sous sa forme latine remonte au quinzième siècle, ne semble pas avoir été considéré. Mozart entendit Bassi à Prague quand il n'avait que vingt ans dans le rôle du Comte Almaviva dans *Le nozze di Figaro*: il s'était imposé au cours des deux années précédentes comme un artiste très apprécié. La création gagna



donc une distinction supplémentaire avec la prestation d'un Don Giovanni de vingt et un ans. Des années plus tard, Bassi raconta comment Mozart encourageait ses chanteurs à improviser (à condition de toujours rester en contact avec l'orchestre), et que sur sa suggestion le compositeur récrivit cinq fois le duo entre Don Giovanni et Zerlina ("Là ci darem la mano"). En 1815, Bassi interpréta de nouveau son rôle le plus célèbre, sous la direction de Carl Maria von Weber.

Si on sait peu de chose du premier Leporello, Felice Ponziani, en revanche Emanuel Schikaneder, le premier Papageno, demeure si familier comme nom et si vivant comme personnage qu'il semble presque inutile d'apporter un commentaire. C'était un homme de théâtre complet: auteur, metteur en scène, impresario, acteur, danseur et, accessoirement, chanteur. Il ne fait aucun doute qu'il inventa le personnage de Papageno avec l'idée de le chanter lui-même, et que Mozart écrivait une musique adaptée à sa voix, dans une tessiture confortable placée dans le registre moyen et dans un style limité afin de ne pas nécessiter la technique que seul pouvait posséder un chanteur d'opéra ayant fait de sérieuses études vocales.

Les interprètes de Verdi étant beaucoup plus proches de notre époque, les informations les

concernant sont plus nombreuses. Parmi ses barytons, le Français Victor Maurel était le plus célèbre et le plus favorisé de tous. Il existe même des enregistrements phonographiques de plusieurs de ses solos extraits de ses deux "créations" les plus fameuses: Iago dans *Otello* (1887) et *Falstaff* (1893). Il était très admiré comme chanteur acteur, malheureusement ses enregistrements (réalisés en 1907) nous renseignent bien peu sur sa prestation sur scène. Sa voix ne semble jamais avoir été considérée comme étant remarquable pour sa richesse ou son volume, ni pour un registre aigu particulièrement étendu.

Mais Verdi – dont l'écriture pour baryton exige indubitablement ces qualités – ne semble jamais avoir été particulièrement intéressé par celles-ci. Pour son premier Macbeth, Rigoletto et Germont père, il choisit le chanteur franco-italien Felice Varesi qu'il considérait comme "le seul artiste aujourd'hui en Italie capable de prendre le rôle auquel je songe [Macbeth] du fait de son style vocal, de sa sensibilité et également de son apparence". Dans plusieurs lettres, Verdi lui donna des instructions détaillées concernant les exigences expressives et dramatiques, soulignant tout le temps que le premier devoir du chanteur est envers le dramaturge et son texte. Varesi

est parfois soupçonné d'avoir contribué au fiasco de la création de *La traviata* (1853), ou du moins d'avoir participé à l'état d'esprit du "je vous l'avais bien dit" envers celui-ci. Apparemment, il estimait être mal servi, après ses triomphes précédents, par le rôle du vieux Germont. Mesurant le prestige d'un rôle dans les arias, il estimait que "Di Provenza il mar" et la cabalette étaient une pauvre contribution. Partager la moitié de l'un des plus admirables duos de Verdi était clairement une médiocre compensation.

Le nom de Varesi est rarement mentionné de nos jours. Jean-Baptiste Faure, le premier Posa dans *Don Carlos*, et Antoni Pini-Corsi, qui chanta le rôle de Ford dans la création de *Falstaff*, sont plus souvent évoqués, du moins par les collectionneurs de disques, car Faure composa également des chansons telles que "Les Rameaux" et "Crucifix" qui furent très appréciées par les chanteurs de l'époque de Caruso, tandis que Pini-Corsi allait réaliser de nombreux enregistrements, mais seulement après avoir changé la direction de sa carrière et être devenu le *buffo* préféré des italiens. En effet, Faure détient probablement le record du plus grand nombre de "créations" de rôles de baryton, incluant Nélusko dans *L'Africaine* et le rôle titre dans *Hamlet* d'Ambroise Thomas

(1868). Faure était semble-t-il un chanteur très remarquable, possédant un beau timbre de voix produit de manière égale et intelligente. Cependant, si l'on songe à lui comme le "créateur" du Rodrigo de Verdi, il est peut-être surprenant d'apprendre que son cheval de bataille préféré était le Méphistophélès de Gounod.

Une observation se dégage de ce bref panorama d'interprètes "originaux": si on se souvient d'eux aujourd'hui en raison de leur association avec des rôles communément qualifiés de "baryton", ils étaient en fait remarquablement variés. Mais cela est également vrai du présent programme; le Méphistophélès de Gounod n'a certes pas sa place ici, mais on trouve l'air de Leporello faisant la liste des conquêtes de Don Giovanni (page 31), un morceau favori de toute une lignée de basses allant de Chaliapine, Kipnis et Christoff à Samuel Ramey. Avec le Monologue de Ford dans *Falstaff* (page 32), Thomas Allen étend sa voix lyrique pour inclure le style davantage déclamatoire du Verdi de la dernière période. Et dans le "bis", la "Chanson de Septembre" de Kurt Weill (page 34), il l'étend encore davantage, mais dans une direction complètement différente. Cette mélodie bien connue possède une origine



qui l'est moins. Elle suivit immédiatement le spectacle *Knickerbocker Holiday* mis en scène à New York en 1938, celui-ci provenant d'une opérette satirique inachevée, *Der Kuhhandel* (1934) qui avait été brièvement à l'affiche du Savoy Theatre de Londres en 1935 dans une adaptation anglaise intitulée *A Kingdom for a Cow*. La "Chanson de Septembre" devint célèbre grâce à l'enregistrement américain original datant d'avant la guerre, et dans notre liste d'"originaux", il faudrait maintenant ajouter le presque aphone (mais inoubliable) Walter Houston.

Enfin, la variété prend une autre forme dans ce programme. Comme dans les albums précédents, les solos alternent avec de plus longs extraits, des duos et des ensembles. Deux buts sont obtenus: la voix principale est entendue, comme dans les opéras, mélangée avec les autres, et la collection dans son ensemble devient plus complète. Dans *Die Zauberflöte*, Papageno l'oiseleur rencontre l'héroïne Pamina à un moment où tous deux sont seuls et voudraient ne pas l'être (page 9). S'ils s'accordent sur le fait que l'idéal est l'amour entre mari et femme, ils le contemplent chaleureusement mais sans passion. Son autre duo est un morceau de pure joie: Papageno a trouvé sa Papagena

(page 10). Entre les deux duos, Papageno et Pamina doivent passer par une période difficile au cours de laquelle la mort semble la seule solution. Pamina est sauvée par son amant, Papageno par les Trois Génies qui parlent la langue du bon sens envoyée du ciel, et indiquent un remède opportun.

De Verdi, avec *La traviata* nous avons d'abord l'un de ses plus remarquables duos pour baryton et soprano, souvent entre père et fille, ici, entre Germont père et Violetta: ici il semble être un ennemi (bien que père lui-même) et devient une figure paternelle (page 8). En l'espace d'à peine vingt minutes s'effectue un complet renversement de fortune, le tournant étant la résolution d'une note à laquelle est suspendue la décision vitale et tragique. Dans *Don Carlos*, le partenaire en duo du baryton est un ténor, et fait inhabituel pour une telle combinaison, leurs voix s'élèvent non pas en hostilité mais en amitié. Ils se jurent fidélité au cours de leur prière militaire au "Dieu qui nous a réunis" (page 4), et celle-ci est tragiquement mise à l'épreuve lors de la scène de la prison quand Rodrigo sacrifie sa vie pour permettre à Carlos d'être libre (page 12). La musique que Verdi composa pour Rodrigo dans cette scène est l'une des plus généreuses et des plus émouvantes de tout le répertoire.

Et on notera qu'il l'écrivit pour baryton. Le goût du public semble avoir dicté qu'en général le héros doit être un ténor; on a parfois le sentiment qu'il aurait pu être aussi souvent un baryton si Verdi avait pu imposer sa volonté.

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Traduction: Francis Marchal

Né à Seham dans le comté de Durham, **Sir Thomas Allen** fit ses débuts professionnels avec le Welsh National Opera, et est aujourd'hui une star des grandes salles lyriques du monde entier. Au Royal Opera de Covent Garden à Londres, où il a célébré en 2006 le trente-cinquième anniversaire de ses débuts avec cette compagnie, il a chanté plus de quarante rôles. En 2006, il a également célébré le vingt-cinquième anniversaire de ses débuts au Metropolitan Opera de New York. Il est 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 au Festival de Glyndebourne.

Il a été particulièrement acclamé pour ses interprétations des rôles de Billy Budd, Pelléas, Eugène Onéguine, Ulisse et Beckmesser, pour les grands rôles mozartiens tels que le Comte

Almaviva, Don Alfonso, Papageno, Guglielmo, et bien sûr Don Giovanni. Récemment, il a chanté Eisenstein (*Die Fledermaus*), Don Alfonso, Ulisse et Don Giovanni au Bayerische Staatsoper; Yeletsky (*La Dame de Pique*), Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*) et le rôle titre de *Sweeney Todd* au Royal Opera de Covent Garden; Eisenstein au Festival de Glyndebourne; Don Alfonso au Festival de Pâques et au Festival estival de Salzbourg; le Fôrestier (*La Petite Renarde rusée*) à l'Opéra de San Francisco et Beckmesser et Don Alfonso au Metropolitan Opera de New York.

Également célèbre en concert, il se produit en récital en Grande-Bretagne, à travers l'Europe, en Australie, en Amérique, et a chanté avec les plus grands orchestres et chefs du monde entier. Il a enregistré la plus grande partie de son répertoire avec des chefs aussi éminents que Georg Solti, James Levine, Neville Marriner, Bernard Haitink, Simon Rattle, Wolfgang Sawallisch et Riccardo Muti.

Le premier livre de Thomas Allen, *Foreign Parts – A Singer's Journal*, a été publié en 1993, et en 2003 a fait ses débuts triomphaux de metteur en scène avec *Albert Herring* au Royal College of Music de Londres. Il a aussi mis en scène des productions de *Don Giovanni* et *Così fan tutte* au Sage, Gateshead, dans le nord



d'Angleterre. Ses nombreux titres honorifiques incluent le Bayerischer Kammersänger décerné par le Bayerische Staatsoper, le "Honorary Membership" de la Royal Academy of Music de Londres, le "Prince Consort Professor" du Royal College of Music de Londres, le "Hambro Visiting Professorship of Opera Studies" de l'Université d'Oxford, le "Fellowship" du Royal College of Music de Londres et de l'Université de Sunderland, un M.A. de l'Université de Newcastle et un D.Mus de l'Université de Durham. Thomas Allen a été créé Commandeur de l'empire britannique (CBE) en 1989, et a été anobli en 1999.

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.

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

instrumentistes les plus talentueux d'Europe.

Orchestre résident au Royal Festival Hall, il joue également un rôle central dans la vie musicale britannique en choisissant des résidences régionales qui sont l'occasion idéale de développer un programme éducatif dynamique centré sur la communauté. Lauréat de nombreux prix, l'ensemble a été salué unanimement par les critiques pour ses programmes innovateurs dont l'un des objectifs principaux est l'interprétation et la commande d'œuvres nouvelles des plus grands compositeurs d'aujourd'hui.

Un nombre croissant de concerts de l'Orchestre sont retransmis par BBC Radio 3, entre autres sa participation annuelle aux Promenade Concerts de la BBC. L'orchestre symphonique le plus enregistré au monde, avec plus de mille disques à son actif, parmi lesquels plusieurs bandes originales pour le cinéma et la télévision, le Philharmonia Orchestra est réputé dans le monde entier.

Sa discographie comprend, pour Opera Rara, plusieurs disques de récitals ainsi que treize intégrales d'opéras et, pour Opera in English chez Chandos, série financée par la Peter Moores Foundation *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Thieving Magpie*, *Wozzeck*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Elixir of Love*, *Lucia of*

Lammermoor, *Faust*, *Carmen*, *Aïda*, *La Bohème*, *Madam Butterfly*, *Turandot*, une version primée de *Tosca* ainsi que plusieurs récitals solistes d'airs lyriques avec Bruce Ford, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny et John Tomlinson. Le Philharmonia Orchestra consolide constamment sa réputation internationale grâce à des tournées régulières et récemment de prestigieuses résidences au Châtelet Théâtre Musical à Paris, au Megaron à Athènes et au Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts à New York.

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

Sa carrière, nationale et internationale, est extrêmement remplie, aussi bien sur la scène lyrique qu'en concert. Il a dirigé plusieurs productions de l'English National Opera et de l'Opera North et collabore régulièrement avec le Philharmonia Orchestra et le London

Philharmonic Orchestra. C'est avec *Così fan tutte* qu'il fit ses débuts au Festival de Glyndebourne en 1996, une scène qu'il retrouva en 1998 pour diriger la création mondiale de *Flight* de Jonathan Dove.

Il séjourne fréquemment en Espagne où il a dirigé en concert la plupart des grands orchestres espagnols. C'est lui qui dirigea la première espagnole de *Peter Grimes* à Madrid et en 1996 la première production espagnole de *The Rake's Progress*. Il a dirigé en Allemagne, en Suisse, aux Pays-Bas, au Festival de Pesaro en Italie, au Festival international de Hong-Kong, au Japon pour une tournée de *Carmen* et au Mexique avec l'Orchestre symphonique d'UNAM. Il a récemment dirigé plusieurs nouvelles productions dont *Fidelio* au Festival de Nouvelle-Zélande, *Lucia di Lammermoor* avec le New Israeli Opera et *Don Giovanni* à l'Opéra d'état de Hannover.

En studio, il a participé entre autres à la production de la BBC Television de

Der Vampyr de Marschner, dirigeant aussi vingt-huit intégrales d'opéras financées par la Peter Moores Foundation. Plusieurs de ces intégrales furent enregistrées pour Opera Rara et primées, *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* de Donizetti recevant en Belgique le Prix Cecilia. Pour Chandos, David Parry a dirigé une série d'enregistrements d'airs d'opéra (avec Sir Thomas Allen, Jennifer Larmore, Bruce Ford, Alan Opie, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny, John Tomlinson, Barry Banks, Della Jones et Andrew Shore) de même que *Nabucco*, *Fidelio*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *A Masked Ball*, *Idomeneo*, *Carmen*, *The Thieving Magpie*, *Don Giovanni*, *Don Pasquale*, *The Elixir of Love*, *Lucia of Lammermoor*, *Ernani*, *Il trovatore*, *Aida*, *Faust*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *La Bohème*, *Turandot*, l'enregistrement primé de *Tosca* et des extraits de *Der Rosenkavalier*, tous ces enregistrements étant réalisés en collaboration avec la Peter Moores Foundation.

Sir Thomas Allen as Ford in
The Royal Opera's production
of *Falstaff*

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Grandi arie operistiche

Questo recital di sir Thomas Allen si aggiunge a un catalogo sempre più ricco di opere tradotte in lingua inglese, ed è interamente dedicato a una voce particolare, in questo caso quella del baritono lirico, al fine di illustrarne il carattere ed esplorarne il repertorio. Il programma riunisce prevalentemente i brani di due compositori fondamentali per questa voce. Oggi il melodramma ha quattrocento anni di storia e, tra tutte le voci maschili, quella del baritono forse è rimasta la più costante, essendo la più vicina alla normale voce parlante. Anche in questo caso, però, le aspettative dei compositori sono cambiate notevolmente e i cantanti sono stati costretti ad adattarsi. Tra *Il flauto magico* (1791), ultimo capolavoro comico di Mozart, e il *Falstaff* di Verdi (1893) intercorre poco più di un secolo ma, per quanto riguarda i requisiti vocali del cantante, la differenza è profonda.

Per le sue partiture Mozart non richiede espressamente voci baritonali. Nel *Don Giovanni*, per esempio, i ruoli maschili sono distribuiti tra un tenore e quattro bassi. Che il compositore abbia in mente diversi tipi di voce è chiaro, ma la distinzione non è tale da

impedire ai bassi tout court di cantare il ruolo di Leporello e qualche volta anche quello dello stesso Don Giovanni. Analogamente, nelle *Nozze di Figaro*, non è infrequente avere un basso nel ruolo di Figaro (il grande Ezio Pinza e il suo successore Cesare Siepi, per esempio, lo interpretarono più volte) e molto spesso l'interprete può appartenere a un'altra categoria intermedia, quella del baritono basso. Ma anche quella del baritono viene normalmente considerata una categoria intermedia: l'inquadratura proviene dalla tradizione corale, in cui la musica a quattro voci è suddivisa tra soprani, contralti, tenori e bassi. Ufficialmente i nostri cori non comprendono baritoni, anche se in realtà sappiamo che alcuni "tenori" e la maggior parte dei "bassi" sono effettivamente baritoni, a cui viene chiesto di cantare note più alte o più basse, a seconda dei casi.

Inoltre è abbastanza certo che in media il baritono di un coro a cui vengano assegnate parti più basse sia in grado di affrontare con un certo successo, come dilettante, le arie mozartiane incluse in questo recital (potrebbe anche aver perfezionato il brano di Figaro per la nuova recluta, per intrattenere gli amici).

Sarebbe però inconsueto per la stessa voce avere rapporti altrettanto facili con Verdi: il più delle volte il risultato sarebbe un mal di gola. È vero che il cantante sarebbe in grado di leggere una partitura verdiana – la parte per baritono nel duetto della *Traviata*, per esempio – senza trovare note al di fuori della propria estensione. Il vero problema è la quantità di note pericolosamente confinanti con la gamma alta e la frequenza con cui si pretende che un baritono si trovi a proprio agio in queste regioni. La differenza tra le partiture di Mozart e quelle di Verdi sta principalmente nella tessitura del ruolo, che è salita di un tono e forse più. A questo si accompagna l'esigenza di una maggiore potenza, risonanza e forza drammatica. Il vero baritono verdiano è raro quasi quanto un vero basso e le varietà più leggere di tenore. Oggi, soprattutto in Italia, un tempo fonte principale di queste voci, la fornitura sembra scarseggiare sempre più.

Il Figaro originale di Mozart a Vienna nel 1786 fu l'italiano Francesco Benucci, sempre definito un basso, talvolta con l'aggiunta dell'aggettivo *buffo*. In una lettera Mozart definisce la sua voce "eccezionale" e quest'approvazione deve aver cementato la stima che il compositore nutriva per l'artista, a cui fu chiesto di interpretare il ruolo di

Leporello nella prima viennese riveduta del *Don Giovanni* nel 1788 e quello di Guglielmo due anni dopo, nella prima rappresentazione di *Così fan tutte*. Tutto ciò fa sorgere altri dubbi sul suo tipo di voce: la musica di Guglielmo ha un carattere relativamente alto, leggero e lirico, mentre quella di Leporello è vicina a quella di un vero basso (il rigo musicale è sempre più basso di quello di Don Giovanni) in un ruolo di caratterista.

Della voce del primo Don Giovanni, Luigi Bassi, abbiamo almeno una descrizione risalente al 1800 che la colloca "tra tenore e basso" – e rileviamo che non si fa ricorso alla parola "baritono", sebbene l'utilizzo del termine latino risalga al XV secolo. Mozart l'aveva sentito cantare a Praga quando, appena ventenne, aveva interpretato il ruolo del conte Almaviva nelle *Nozze di Figaro*: l'artista si era affermato e si era fatto apprezzare nei due anni precedenti. La prima, quindi, fu ancora più esclusiva, in quanto proponeva un Don Giovanni appena ventunenne. Negli anni successivi, Bassi avrebbe riferito che Mozart incoraggiava i cantanti a improvvisare (a patto di rimanere in contatto anche con l'orchestra), e che, su suggerimento di Bassi, avrebbe riscritto addirittura cinque volte il duetto tra Don Giovanni e Zerlina ("Là ci darem la



mano"). Nel 1815 l'artista cantò ancora una volta il suo ruolo più famoso, sotto la direzione di Carl Maria von Weber.

Del Leporello originale, Felice Ponziani, si sa poco, ma Emanuel Schikaneder, il primo Papageno, rimane un nome molto familiare e fu un vero personaggio. Uomo di teatro fino al midollo, fu scrittore, regista, impresario, attore, ballerino e anche cantante. Senza dubbio fu lui a inventare il ruolo di Papageno, con l'intenzione di interpretarlo personalmente, e Mozart avrebbe composto musica apposta per la sua voce, mantenendola in un'estensione comoda, entro il registro medio, e in uno stile che non richiedesse le tecniche esclusive del cantante lirico preparato.

I melodrammi di Giuseppe Verdi sono molto più vicini ai nostri tempi e quindi le notizie sui loro interpreti sono molto più esaurienti. Tra i baritoni, il più famoso e il preferito dal compositore, il francese Victor Maurel, incise addirittura alcuni 78 giri di brani solistici delle sue più famose "creazioni" verdine: Iago nell'*Otello* (1887) e Falstaff (1893). Fu molto ammirato come attore di melódramma e i dischi delle sue interpretazioni teatrali (incisi nel 1907) non gli rendono giustizia. La voce in sé non sembra mai essere stata considerata notevole per la ricchezza

o il volume né per l'estensione del registro superiore.

Però a Verdi – i cui brani per baritono indubbiamente esigono questi attributi – non sembravano interessare particolarmente. Per il suo primo Macbeth, Rigoletto e Germont padre, il compositore scelse un franco-italiano, Felice Varesi, che definì "l'unico artista attualmente in Italia in grado di interpretare la parte a cui sto pensando [Macbeth] per lo stile del suo canto, la sua sensibilità e anche l'aspetto". In diverse lettere Verdi gli diede istruzioni dettagliate a proposito dei requisiti espressivi, drammatici, sottolineando sempre che il dovere fondamentale di un cantante è nei confronti del drammaturgo e delle sue parole. In occasione della prima della *Traviata* (1853) talvolta si pensa che Varesi avesse contribuito al fiasco, perlomeno per il suo atteggiamento disfattista nei confronti dell'opera. Pare che si fosse sentito sminuito, dati i suoi precedenti trionfi, nel ruolo dell'anziano Germont. Dal momento che misurava l'importanza di un ruolo in base alle arie, ritenne poco adeguate "Di Provenza" e la cabaletta. Evidentemente, per lui avere una parte in uno dei più bei duetti verdiani rappresentava una magra ricompensa.

Oggi Varesi si sente nominare di rado. Vengono ricordati più spesso Jean-Baptiste

Faure, il primo Posa del *Don Carlos*, e Antonio Pini-Corsi, che cantò Ford alla prima del *Falstaff*, perlomeno dai collezionisti di dischi, perché Faure compose anche brani come "Les Rameaux" e "Crucifix", che ebbero successo presso i cantanti dell'epoca di Caruso, e Pini-Corsi fu un artista prolifico nelle registrazioni, quando la sua carriera aveva cambiato direzione ed era diventato il buffo preferito in Italia. Faure detiene il record di "creazioni" per baritono, con Nélusko ne *L'Africaine* e il ruolo di protagonista in *Hamlet* di Thomas (1868). Era considerato un ottimo cantante, con una voce di straordinaria qualità, prodotta in maniera uniforme e utilizzata con intelligenza. Se si pensa che fu il primo Rodrigo di Verdi, però, può essere sorprendente venire a sapere che il suo cavallo di battaglia fosse il Mefistofele di Gounod.

Un'osservazione che scaturisce da questa breve rassegna di interpreti "originali" è che, nonostante siano oggi siano ricordati per le loro associazioni con ruoli generalmente destinati al baritono, avevano voci molto diverse. Ma questo vale anche per il nostro programma; non che il Mefistofele di Gounod vi trovi posto, ma viene incluso il Catalogo di Leporello (traccia [6]), beniamino di tutta una serie di bassi, come Chaliapin, Kipnis,

Christoff, fino a Samuel Ramey. Con il monologo di Ford dal *Falstaff* (traccia [3]), sir Thomas Allen estende la sua voce lirica per abbracciare lo stile più declamatorio del tardo Verdi. E nel brano "September Song" di Kurt Weill (traccia [14]), questo si ripete, ma la voce prende una direzione completamente diversa. La nota melodia, tra parentesi, ha un'origine meno familiare. Faceva parte di uno spettacolo intitolato *Knickerbocker Holiday* allestito a New York nel 1938, che prendeva materiale a prestito da un'operetta satirica incompiuta, *Der Kuhhandel* (1934), brevemente rappresentata al Savoy Theatre di Londra nel 1935 in inglese e intitolata *A Kingdom for a Cow*. "September Song" divenne famosa attraverso la registrazione originale americana del periodo prebellico e al nostro elenco di interpreti "originali" oggi bisognerebbe aggiungere la non-voce di Walter Houston (comunque indimenticabile).

Infine, la varietà assume un'altra forma nel nostro programma. Come in quelli precedenti, i brani solistici sono inframmezzati da brani più lunghi, duetti e concertati, che hanno due obiettivi: fare ascoltare la voce principale, come nei melodrammi, in combinazione con altre, e arricchire la raccolta integrale. Nel *Flauto magico*, Papageno l'uccellatore,



fa la conoscenza dell'eroina, Pamina, in un momento in cui entrambi si trovano involontariamente soli (traccia [9]). L'amore tra uomo e donna, concordano, è l'ideale, e lo prendono in considerazione, ma in maniera spassionata. L'altro duetto è un brano di pura allegria: Papageno ha trovato la sua Papagena (traccia [10]). Nel frattempo, come Pamina, Papageno è costretto ad attraversare un momento difficile in cui la morte sembra l'unica soluzione. Pamina viene salvata dal suo innamorato, Papageno dai Tre Geni che parlano il linguaggio celestiale del buonsenso e gli indicano un rimedio tempestivo.

Dalla *Traviata* di Verdi abbiamo il primo dei migliori, grandi duetti per baritono e soprano, spesso padre e figlia, qui Germont padre e Violetta: un apparente nemico (sebbene sia padre) si trasforma in figura paterna (traccia [11]). Nell'arco di appena venti minuti la situazione viene completamente ribaltata, il momento della svolta è rappresentato da una nota sola, dalla cui risoluzione dipende la cruciale e tragica decisione. Nel *Don Carlos* il compagno del duetto con il baritono è il tenore e, cosa inconsueta per questa combinazione, le loro voci non si sfidano, ma inneggiano insieme all'amicizia. Mentre cantano la loro preghiera

di soldati "Dio, che nell'alma infondere" ["God who has brought us together"] (traccia [12]), gli amici si giurano una fedeltà che viene tragicamente dimostrata nella scena della prigionia, quando Rodrigo dà la propria vita per la libertà di Carlos (traccia [13]). La musica che Verdi compose per Rodrigo in questa scena è tra la più generosa e sentita della sua intera produzione. Soprattutto, è dedicata al baritono. Il gusto del pubblico sembra aver decretato che l'eroe del melodramma debba essere un tenore; ma talvolta si ha l'impressione che, se fosse dipeso da Verdi, anche il baritono sarebbe stato protagonista in egual misura.

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Traduzione: Emanuela Guastella

Nato a Seaham, nella contea di Durham, sir **Thomas Allen** ha esordito come professionista con la Welsh National Opera e oggi è una star dei grandi teatri lirici di tutto il mondo. Alla Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, dove nel 2006 ha festeggiato trentacinque anni dal suo debutto con la compagnia, ha cantato oltre quaranta ruoli. Nel 2006 ha festeggiato anche il venticinquesimo anniversario dal suo esordio alla Metropolitan Opera, New York. È un apprezzato interprete per la Lyric Opera

di Chicago, l'opera di San Francisco e Los Angeles, la Bayerische Staatsoper di Monaco e la Scala di Milano e partecipa ai festival di Salisburgo e Glyndebourne.

Sono state particolarmente apprezzate le sue interpretazioni di Billy Budd, Pelléas, Eugenio Onieghin, Ulisse e Beckmesser, che si aggiungono ai grandi ruoli mozartiani: il Conte Almaviva, Don Alfonso, Papageno, Guglielmo e, naturalmente, don Giovanni. I suoi ultimi impegni hanno compreso Eisenstein (*Die Fledermaus*), don Alfonso, Ulisse e don Giovanni alla Bayerische Staatsoper; Eleckij (*La dama di picche*), Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*) e il ruolo di protagonista in *Sweeney Todd* alla Royal Opera House; Eisenstein per Glyndebourne Festival; Don Alfonso al festival primaverile ed estivo di Salisburgo; il Guardacaccia (*La volpe astuta*) all'Opera di San Francisco; e Beckmesser e Don Alfonso alla Metropolitan Opera di New York.

Thomas Allen è altrettanto famoso nelle sale da concerto. Svolge recital nel Regno Unito e in Europa, Australia e America e ha collaborato con le più grandi orchestre e con i direttori di tutto il mondo. Ha registrato la maggior parte del suo repertorio con nomi illustri, tra cui Georg Solti, James Levine, Neville Marriner,

Bernard Haitink, sir Simon Rattle, Wolfgang Sawallisch e Riccardo Muti.

Il primo libro di Thomas Allen, *Foreign Parts – A Singer's Journal* è stato pubblicato nel 1993; in 2003 è venuto un trionfante esordio nella regia con *Albert Herring* al Royal College of Music, seguito da *Don Giovanni* e *Così fan tutte* alla Sage, Gateshead (nel nord-est d'Inghilterra). È stato insignito di numerose onorificenze, tra cui quella di Bayerischer Kammersänger dalla Bayerische Staatsoper e la Honorary Membership della Royal Academy of Music. Inoltre è Prince Consort Professor del Royal College of Music, Hambro Visiting Professor of Opera Studies all'università di Oxford, Fellow del Jesus College Oxford, Fellow del Royal College of Music, Fellow della University of Sunderland. Ha ricevuto un M.A. dall'università di Newcastle University e un D.Mus. da quella di Durham. Nel 1989 è stato nominato Commander of the British Empire e nel 1999 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.

La **Philharmonia Orchestra**, una delle più grandi orchestre del mondo, è diretta per la undicesima stagione consecutiva dal famoso maestro tedesco Christoph von Dohnányi, in qualità di Direttore Principale. In precedenza questa carica era appartenuta a Otto Klemperer e da allora l'Orchestra ha collaborato con nomi di prestigio come Lorin Maazel (Direttore Principale Associato), Riccardo Muti (Direttore Principale e Direttore Musicale), Giuseppe Sinopoli (Direttore Musicale) e, attualmente, Kurt Sanderling (Direttore Emerito), Vladimir Ashkenazy (Direttore Laureato) e Sir Charles Mackerras (Direttore Principale Ospite), oltre che con artisti importanti come

Wilhelm Furtwängler, Richard Strauss, Arturo Toscanini, Guido Cantelli, Herbert von Karajan e Carlo Maria Giulini. L'Orchestra continua a collaborare con direttori e solisti di fama mondiale, oltre ad attrarre nelle sue fila i giovani musicisti europei di maggiore talento.

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

I concerti dell'Orchestra sono trasmessi sempre più frequentemente da BBC Radio 3, incluso l'apparizione annuale in occasione dei BBC Proms. La Philharmonia Orchestra gode di una reputazione a livello mondiale ed è l'orchestra sinfonica che ha inciso di più in tutto il mondo, con un catalogo di oltre 1000 incisioni, tra cui una serie di colonne sonore per film e televisione. La sua discografia include, per Opera Rara, numerosi dischi di recital, oltre a tredici opere complete, e

nella serie Opera in English per Chandos, sponsorizzata dalla Peter Moores Foundation, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Thieving Magpie*, *Wozzeck*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Elixir of Love*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Faust*, *Carmen*, *Aida*, *La Bobème*, *Madam Butterfly*, *Turandot*, la *Tosca*, vincitrice di un premio, e vari album di recital, con assoli di arie d'opera eseguite da Bruce Ford, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny e John Tomlinson. La Philharmonia Orchestra continua a consolidare la sua fama internazionale con frequenti tournèe e attraverso le recenti, prestigiose residenze presso il Châtelet Théâtre Musical di Parigi, il Megaron di Atene e il Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts di New York.

David Parry ha studiato con Sergiu Celibidache ed ha cominciato la sua carriera come assistente di Sir John Pritchard. Ha debuttato all'English Music Theatre, quindi è diventato direttore d'orchestra presso la Städtische Bühnen di Dortmund e la Opera North. È stato Direttore Musicale di Opera 80 dal 1983 al 1987 e dal 1992 è stato Direttore Musicale fondatore dell'Opera di Almeida.

Lavora copiosamente in opere e concerti, a livello nazionale ed internazionale. Ha

diretto diverse produzioni presso la English National Opera e la Opera North e appare regolarmente con la Philharmonia Orchestra e la London Philharmonic Orchestra. Nel 1996 ha debuttato con *Così fan tutte* al Glyndebourne Festival, dove nel 1998 ha diretto la prima mondiale di *Flight* di Jonathan Dove.

È un frequente visitatore della Spagna dove si è esibito in concerto con la maggior parte delle maggiori orchestre spagnole. Ha diretto la prima spagnola di *Peter Grimes* a Madrid e nel 1996 la prima produzione spagnola di *The Rake's Progress*. È apparso in Germania, Svizzera, Paesi Bassi, al Festival di Pesaro in Italia, al Festival Internazionale di Hong Kong, in Giappone con una tournèe della *Carmen* e in Messico con la UNAM Symphony Orchestra. Recenti nuove produzioni da lui dirette comprendono il *Fidelio* al Festival della Nuova Zelanda, *Lucia di Lammermoor* alla New Israeli Opera e *Don Giovanni* alla Staatsoper di Hannover.

Il suo lavoro in studio di registrazione comprende la produzione della BBC di *Der Vampyr* di Marschner nonché ventotto registrazioni operistiche complete con il patrocinio della Peter Moores Foundation. Tra questi vi sono numerosi dischi per

l'etichetta Opera Rara che hanno vinti parecchi premi, tra cui il belga Prix Cecilia per la *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* di Donizetti. Per Chandos ha diretto una serie di registrazioni di arie d'opera (con Sir Thomas Allen, Jennifer Larmore, Bruce Ford, Alan Opie, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny, John Tomlinson, Barry Banks, Della Jones e Andrew Shore), *Nabucco*, *Fidelio*,

The Flying Dutchman, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *A Masked Ball*, *Idomeneo*, *Carmen*, *The Thieving Magpie*, *Don Giovanni*, *Don Pasquale*, *The Elixir of Love*, *Lucia of Lammermoor*, *Ernani*, *Il trovatore*, *Aida*, *Faust*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *La Bohème*, *Turandot*, *Tosca* (vincitrice di un premio) e brani scelti da *Der Rosenkavalier*, tutte in collaborazione con la Peter Moores Foundation.

Sir Thomas Allen as Papageno in The Royal Opera's production of *The Magic Flute*



from *The Magic Flute*

Papageno's Aria

Papageno

- [1] I'm sure that there could never be
a more contented man than me!
I earn my living as I please,
I charm the birds from out the trees.
I set my nets against the sky,
I call the birds and down they fly...
So when you hear my music play
you'll know that I'm not far away.

If only I could cast a spell
to capture pretty girls as well.
My nets would get them by the score,
each day I'd catch a hundred more.
And soon I would fulfil my dream,
a thousand girls in my harem...
If I achieved my heart's desire,
I'd hang my nets up and retire.

A thousand maidens might be fun,
but I'd have to set my heart on one.
I'd choose the girl I liked the best
and take her home to share my nest.
We'd bill and coo, we'd hug and kiss,
and ev'ry night I'd play her this...

I'd hold her close, the pretty thing,
And she would sleep beneath my wing.
Emanuel Schikaneder, translation by Jeremy Sams.
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from *The Marriage of Figaro*

Figaro's Aria

Figaro

- [2] Here's an end to your life as a rover,
here's an end to the young Casanova;
it was fun for a while but it's over,
we will soon wipe the smile off your face.

Here's an end to our proud little peacock,
scrubbed and powdered and primped to
perfection.
Here's an end to your girlish complexion,
to your ribbons and satin and lace.
We will soon wipe the smile off your face.
Here's an end to airs and graces, pretty laces,
your perfection, your girlish complexion.

Here's an end to your life as a rover, *etc.*

Off you go to join the fighting!
You may find it quite exciting!
Wearing armour may not suit you,
but it's handy when they shoot you.
All around you the battle rages;
think of fame not of the wages.
Not your usual exertions
but alarums and excursions.
After twenty days of marching
you will wish that you were dead,
and all the trumpeting and drumming
means the enemy is coming,
and the bullets will be humming
all around your pretty head.
Here's an end to airs and graces,
pretty hats, pretty laces.
Here's an end to perfection,
to your face, your girlish complexion.

Here's an end to your life as a rover, *etc.*

You may live to tell the story
and I rather hope you do,
for it's off to death and glory,
it's a soldier's life for you.
Lorenzo da Ponte after Beaumarchais, translation
by Jeremy Sams
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from *Falstaff*

Ford's Monologue

Ford

- [3] I'm dreaming? Or is this true?
Two ghastly horns are bursting out of my
forehead.
I'm dreaming? Master Ford! Sleeping?
Rouse yourself! Quick! Wake up now!
Your wife's unfaithful, destruction stalks your
household,
your name, your honour – even your bedroom!
The hour is decided, she means to betray you,
you are mocked and derided!
My friends will tell me
that a husband who's jealous is a madman!
Behind my back slander and scandal follow,
dogging my footsteps, murmuring and sneering.
Who would be married?
What madness!
Woman, I curse you!
Trust in your wife and you'll soon be a cuckold!
Rather entrust my beer to a German,
Open my larder to a Flemish glutton,
Unlock my cellar to a Turkish drunkard?
But! Not my wife with herself.
A filthy scandal!
And it's here in my heart that word re-echoes:
a cuckold! Donkey! Old goat!
How could she do it! Ah! A cuckold!
But you will not escape, no!

Lecher, glutton, be damned, you hulk of mutton!
 First let them couple, I'll catch them at it.
 I'm choking!
 I will avenge this outrage!
 I swear with all my being,
 I'm thankful evermore that I am jealous.
*Arrigo Boito after Shakespeare, translation by
 Amanda Holden*

from Don Carlos

Don Carlos' and Rodrigo's Duet

Rodrigo

- 4 Listen! The cloister doors will soon be unbarred,
 admitting your father and also the Queen.

Don Carlos
 Elizabeth!

Rodrigo

Carlos, at my side show resolve and rouse your
 fainting spirits! For there in Flanders the people
 wait to greet their saviour... We'll pray to God to
 fire your soul with strength!

Don Carlos and Rodrigo

God who has brought us together,
 fire our hearts with flames of glory,
 fire that is noble and pure –
 flames of love that will set men free,

with fire of a love that's pure and is true,
 the love that men should be free!

God grant that this love may fire us,
 may freedom's call inspire us;
 accept the vow that we swear!
 We shall die united in love.

Rodrigo

They are here!

Don Carlos

I'm afraid! When I see her tremble!

Rodrigo

Be brave!

Chorus of Monks

Charles the Fifth our mighty lord...

Don Carlos

She is his wife...

Chorus of Monks

...lies here in dust and lifeless clay;

Don Carlos

...and I have lost her,

Chorus of Monks

While his immortal soul in anguish prays...

Don Carlos

...and I have lost her! Yes, I have lost her!
 She is his wife, ah! my God!

Chorus of Monks

For grace and mercy on high!
 For God is great! Yes, He is great!

Monk

Grant, ah grant him that peace you alone can
 bestow. God alone is great!

Rodrigo

Stay by my side, by my side be strong and calm
 and steel your heart!

Don Carlos and Rodrigo

We'll live as one and together we'll die...
 God accept the vow that we swear,
 let us live, let us die united in love,
 firm in our love! living as one, bound together,
 and together in death, life and death!
*Joseph Méry and Camille Du Locle after Schiller,
 translation by Andrew Porter*

from Macbeth

Macbeth's Scena and Aria

Macbeth

- 5 Treachery! The exiles dare unite against me!

But the words of the spirits reassure me:
 'do not flinch to be fearless and bloody,
 for no man born of woman can harm you!'
 No, Macbeth does not fear you, no,
 nor the feeble boy who commands you!
 All is in the balance, war will strengthen my
 kingdom,
 or destroy me completely!
 And yet my courage, the lifeblood of my being,
 is draining from me!

When you are old and full of tears,
 who'll watch you when you are sleeping?
 No one will soothe your empty years
 or lighten the load of death.
 Mourners may meet at your graveside,
 but you will not hear them weeping.
 No! they will accuse you of murder and spit upon
 your grave
 and they will curse Macbeth, they will accuse you
 of murder.
 Ah, they will accuse you of murder and curse
 you,
 curse you Macbeth!
 No, no one will be weeping, they'll curse you,
 yes, they will curse Macbeth.
*Francesco Maria Piave after Shakespeare,
 translation by Jeremy Sams*
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from Don Giovanni

Leporello's Catalogue Aria

Leporello

- [6] Little lady!
Here's a list I've assembled of the beauties my
master has bedded,
so it might be as well if you read it.
Follow closely, I'll show you the score!
The Italians; six hundred and forty.
Then the Fräuleins; two hundred and thirty.
Five score French ones and ninety in Turkey, but
Señoritas...
Señoritas; one thousand and four... maybe more!
There are maids and country lasses,
lower depths and upper classes,
why countesses, baronesses,
marchionesses and princesses;
every figure and complexion,
never mind how old they are!
Blondes are charming, free with their favours,
yet he loves all other flavours!
Dark-haired passion never wavers;
white hairs offer riper savours!
Someone plumper when it's freezing,
when it's warmer, slim and pleasing.
Tall and splendid; he admires them!
Small and dainty, how he desires them!
I've recorded widows and mothers;
they surrender just like the others.

He debauches saints and sinners,
even absolute beginners.
He will court a queen or pauper;
hag or charmer, he will love her.
Shy or willing, he has to have her!
These are all he's had so far.
You can study all the girls he's had so far!
*Lorenzo da Ponte, translation by
Christopher Cowell*

from The Marriage of Figaro

Figaro's Recitative and Cavatina

Figaro

- [7] Bravo, my lord and master. Now I'm beginning
to see how you planned it. It's all very simple
when you start to understand it. We're off to
London, you as minister, me as messenger. And
my Susanna, to succour and support you. Well, if
that's what you're up to, Figaro has caught you!

Cavatina

So little master, you're dressed to go dancing,
dressed in your best to go strutting and prancing.
I'll put an end to your fun pretty soon;
you may go dancing but I'll call the tune, yes,
I'll call the tune.
If you want dancing, I'll be your master
faster and faster, dance till you drop, yes,
dance till you drop.
You'll see, be careful, Figaro, be careful!

Stay under cover, then you'll discover
what he's about.
I will be cunning, slyly deceiving,
cutting and running, ducking and weaving.
He may be clever but he's met his match.
I can undo any scheme he can hatch,
he may be clever, but he's met his match.
So little master, you're dressed to go dancing
dressed in your best to go strutting and prancing.
I'll put an end to your fun pretty soon;
you may go dancing but I'll call the tune, yes,
I'll call the tune.
*Lorenzo da Ponte after Beaumarchais, translation
by Jeremy Sams
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from La traviata

Recitative and Duet

Germont

- [8] You are Violetta Valéry?

Violetta

I am, sir.

Germont

I am the father of Alfredo.

Violetta

You?

Germont

Yes, of that madman:
how did you bewitch him?
You will ruin my son.

Violetta

Sir, you address a lady
and this is my house.
I'm afraid I must leave you,
more for your sake than mine.

Germont

How gracious! Wait though...

Violetta

Someone has misinformed you.

Germont

He is planning to give you his fortune...

Violetta

He would never dare to... I would refuse.

Germont

Who keeps this household?

Violetta

This contract has so far been secret... but you
may see it...

**Germont**

Heav'ns! What does this mean?
Are you really selling all your worldly
possessions?
What a pity your past must always shame you!

Violetta

My past is over... I love Alfredo
and God has heard my pray'r,
and granted me his pardon!

Germont

Noble and gen'rous feelings.

Violetta

How reassuring to hear you speak so kindly!

Germont

Now I can ask you to sacrifice those feelings.

Violetta

Ah, no, you mustn't...
You want to ask for something that would hurt
me...
I foresaw it. I knew it, ah, I was far too happy!

Germont

Alfredo's father implores you to have pity
on the fate of both his children.

Violetta

Both his children?

Germont

Yes. I have a daughter sent from God,
innocent and appealing,
Alfredo now disowns us both
and scorns all fam'ly feeling.
She has a lover young and true.
They are engaged to marry.
Now he will have to break the tie
that made them both so fond and happy.
Ah, do not turn to bitter thorns.
Roses so sweet and fair.
Ah, do not turn to bitter thorns
the roses of their love.
Ah, don't deny your sympathy;
no, no, you cannot close your heart to me!

Violetta

Ah, I follow! I ought to spend a short while away
from my Alfredo!
I will suffer, suffer so much. Still...

Germont

That's not what I'm asking.

Violetta

Heaven! There's something further: I've tried to
help you!

Germont

Try still harder!

Violetta

You're asking me to give him up for ever?

Germont

It must be.

Violetta

Ah no! Never!
Don't you realise I adore him, and I live my
whole life for him?
There is no one, friend or fam'ly, none to help
me – or to guide me!
And Alfredo has given me his word to live for
me.
Don't you realise I am dying? Yes, I swear it, I
am dying.
And I cannot leave my Alfredo!
Such a torment would be terrible and I could
never bear it.
I would prefer, I would prefer to die.

Germont

The sacrifice is bitter, but hear me out, I beg of
you.
You are so lovely and still so young... In time
you...

Violetta

Ah no, don't say that... You mean well... but I
cannot change.
I never could love another.

Germont

You think so, yet you know how fickle men can
be.

Violetta

Oh heaven!

Germont

A day will come when making love no longer will
excite you:
a life of fading memories is all that's left,
consider...
For you no future happiness of sweet and true
affection,
for this affair will never, never gain the grace of
heaven.

Violetta

I know it! I know it!

Germont

Ah, do not now deceive yourself by trusting in
delusion.

Violetta

I cannot! It's true!

Germont

Say you will be, for my sake, an angel of
consolation:
Violetta won't you pity me?
We still may be in time.
The voice of God inspires me.
His voice inspires a father's words.

**Violetta**

So I must pay for the sins I've committed:
no hope of pity for me is permitted.
God may be merciful. He may forgive me,
Man has no pity, he has no heart,
No, he has no heart. Man is impacable, he has
no heart. Ah!

Germont

Be my consoling angel, you must console us all.
Have pity on me, I beg you console us all.

Violetta

Comfort your daughter, so pure and lovely.
Tell how a victim once suffered so lonely.
She had but a moment, yes, one single moment
of happiness.
She shut it out of her life and she died, yes, she
died.

Germont

Anguish, anguish breaks your heart my poor
child.
Anguish, anguish breaks your heart Violetta.
I am demanding so great a sacrifice, asking you
now to give up Alfredo.
I feel your suffering deep in your spirit.
You must have courage and your noble nature
will win in the end.

Violetta

Comfort your daughter, so pure and lovely.
Tell how a victim once suffered so lonely.

She had but a moment, yes, one single moment
of happiness.
She shut it out of her life and she died, yes, she
died.
One single ray shut it out and then she died.

Germont

What I ask is bitter... Yes, the sacrifice I am
asking will grieve you...
I feel your suffering deep in my spirit.
Have courage and your noble nature will win!
Anguish, anguish breaks your heart,
Have courage and your noble nature will win.
You must be brave, yes, be brave.

Violetta

Then command me.

Germont

Tell him you don't love him.

Violetta

He won't believe me.

Germont

Then leave him

Violetta

He would follow.

Germont

Well then...

Violetta

Embrace me, embrace me as your daughter.
Then I will have the strength.
I'll give you back Alfredo, but he'll be broken
hearted.
He'll need your comfort... you'll need to console
him.

Germont

Your intention?

Violetta

I fear that if I told you, you might oppose it.

Germont

How unselfish! How can I repay your goodness,
your noble goodness,
how can I help you?

Violetta

I'll die! I'll die but you must promise me you
won't ever let him curse me,
you'll tell him of my sacrifice and why I had to
leave him!

Germont

No gen'rous girl, you shall not die:
a sweet path lies before you.
Your tears will be rewarded and the angels will
smile upon you!

Violetta

Now promise me that one day you'll tell him all

that happened...
I will be true until the end. I'm his until I die.

Germont

Your tears will be rewarded, yes, all that you have
suffered and you'll be proud you noble girl of all
that you have done, yes, yes.
He will know. I know that you, you noble girl,
will have no cause to sigh;
Your tears will be rewarded, you'll have no cause
to sigh, ah, no.
Violetta you are noble, you'll have no cause to
sigh.

Violetta

There's someone here, please leave me.

Germont

With all my heart I thank you.

Violetta

Ah leave me.
This may be our last meeting.
May you be happy. Farewell!

Germont

May you be happy. Farewell!

Violetta

Now promise me that one day you'll tell him all
that happened.

Germont

Yes! Yes!

Violetta

I will be true until the end... Farewell!
May you be happy. God bless you!

Germont

May you be happy. God bless you!
*Francesco Maria Piave after Dumas, translation by
Edmund Tracey*
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from The Magic Flute

Pamina and Papageno's Duet

Pamina

- [9] A man in search of truth and beauty
will find the love his heart desires.

Papageno

And so it is a woman's duty
to fan the flame which she inspires.

Pamina and Papageno

We must obey love's holy law,
living as one for evermore.

Pamina

For love possesses powers of healing,
it soothes all pain, it cures all ill.

Papageno

And no day passes without feeling
its force, its universal will.

Pamina and Papageno

Love shows the way to lead our life,
living as one as man and wife.
Man and wife and wife and man.
Man and wife when joined in love
lift their life to heav'n above.
Up to heav'n above.
Emanuel Schikaneder, translation by Jeremy Sams.
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from Don Giovanni

Don Giovanni's Aria

Don Giovanni

- [10] Now that the wine has stopped them from
thinking,
let's have some drinking, women and song.
If there are girls there down in the town square,
you'd better catch them, bring them along.
Skip the formalities, get them all dancing,
try a flamenco with a follia and a bolero,

let's have a ball!

Whirling and kissing, they won't be missing
this one or that one, I'll have them all.
And in the morning you will have plenty,
fifteen or twenty names for the list.
Lorenzo da Ponte, translation by Amanda Holden

from Don Giovanni

Don Giovanni's Canzonetta

Don Giovanni

- [11] Come softly to your window,
my jewel, my darling!
Come, soothe my aching heart
and kiss my tears away.
But, if you still remain deaf to my calling,
I swear your lovely eyes will see my dying day.
Your lips are blushing petals,
roses that offer golden nectar and honey;
Sweet, melting treasure.
If they refuse me now, how I will suffer!
Show me one glimpse of joy, one night of
pleasure!
*Lorenzo da Ponte, translation by Christopher
Cowell*

from Don Carlos

Prison Scene

Rodrigo

- [12] I'm here, Carlos!

Don Carlos

My Rodrigo! my only friend! You've come to see
me here in this my tomb!

Rodrigo

Carlos!

Don Carlos

You understand, that all my strength has failed
me! My love for Elizabeth is a grief that will kill
me... No! I can do no more now for Flanders!
But you, you can bring her that golden age we
both longed to see!

Rodrigo

Ah! You have still to learn what love I bear you.
You soon will leave this gloomy place of death.
With loving tender pride let your friend now
embrace you! I've saved your life!

Don Carlos

But how?

Rodrigo

And I must leave you; we take our last farewell!
Yes, Carlos, yes.
My last day has dawned for ever,
you and I must now say goodbye.
Till that time when God unites us,

when we meet once more on high!
In those eyes tears of grief are shining;
why this glance, why this silent glance of dread?
Dry those tears for death is welcome, o my
Carlos!
Yes death is welcome, o my Carlos, when I die
for you!

Don Carlos
But why do you speak of death?

Rodrigo
Now hear me! Time is pressing... For I have
drawn on my head the thunderbolt of vengeance!
And today it is not you they seek; the man who
stirs rebellion in Flanders... is I!

Don Carlos
O my friend! who'll believe it?

Rodrigo
Twenty proofs attest it! All your papers
were found on me, plans, and secret plots,
overwhelming proofs of treason... A price is on
my head; I have not long to live!

Don Carlos
I'll go before the King...

Rodrigo
You must live for our Flanders! You must live

for our glorious endeavour, live till you see our
dream come true... till the age of gold is revived
by the reign of Carlos. Yes, you must live and
rule, and I must die for you!

Don Carlos
God! A shot! But aimed at whom?

Rodrigo
At me! The revenge of the King has not been
slow to strike me!

Don Carlos
O God!

Rodrigo
Carlos, now hear me... Your mother awaits you
at San Yuste tomorrow: she knows our plan! Ah,
my senses are failing! Carlos! Your hand. Ah! I
die, die contented, for by my death I've saved
your life... Ruler of Spain, saviour of Flanders!
Farewell! Carlos, don't forget! You must live
and rule, and I must die for you! Ah! ah! I die
contented, for by my death I've saved your life...
Ruler of Spain, saviour of Flanders! Farewell!
Carlos, don't forget... ah! my senses are failing...
Carlos your hand, Carlos! Ah! you'll save our
Flanders! Carlos, farewell!
*Joseph Méry and Camille Du Locle after Schiller,
translation by Andrew Porter*

from The Magic Flute

Papagena and Papageno's Duet

Papageno
Pa – Pa – Pa –

Papagena
Pa – Pa – Pa –

Papageno
Pa Pa Pa Pa Pa pa ge na!

Papagena
Pa Pa Pa Pa Pa pa ge no!

Papageno
Will you stay with me for ever?

Papagena
Yes, I'll stay with you for ever.

Papageno
Now at last we'll be together,

Papagena
Two little love birds of one feather,

Papagena and Papageno
Yes, now at last we will be together.

Papageno
Yes, now at last we will be together.
But the one thing that we need,

Papagena
Yes, the one thing that we need...

Papageno and Papagena
...if the Gods do not ignore us,
is a tiny little chorus,
yes, a tiny little chorus
of lots of hungry mouths to feed,
yes, lots of hungry mouths to feed.

Papageno
First there's a little Papageno...

Papagena
Then there's a little Papagena.

Papagena and Papageno
There is no more that we can pray for...

Papagena
Than lots of little Papagenas.

Papageno
Than lots of little Papagenos.

Papageno and Papagena
What greater gift can God provide?
You'll see their parents burst with pride.

Papageno
Papageno!

Papagena
Papagena!

Emanuel Schikaneder, translation by Jeremy Sams

From Knickerbocker Holiday

September Song

14 When I was a young man courting the girls
I played me a waiting game;
If a maid refused me with tossing curls
I let the old earth take a couple of whirls
While I plied her with tears in lieu of pearls.
And as time came around she came my way,
As time came around she came.

But it's a long, long while
From May to December;
And the days grow short
When you reach September;
And the autumn weather turns the leaves to
flame,
And I haven't got time for the waiting game;
For the days dwindle down to a precious few
September, November,
And these few precious days I'd spend with you,
These golden days I'd spend with you.

When you meet with the young men early in
spring
They court you in song and rhyme;
They woo you with words and a clover ring,
But if you examine the goods they bring
They have little to offer but the songs they sing;
And a plentiful waste of time of day
A plentiful waste of time.

words by Kurt Weill and Maxwell Anderson

On session: David Parry and Sir Thomas Allen





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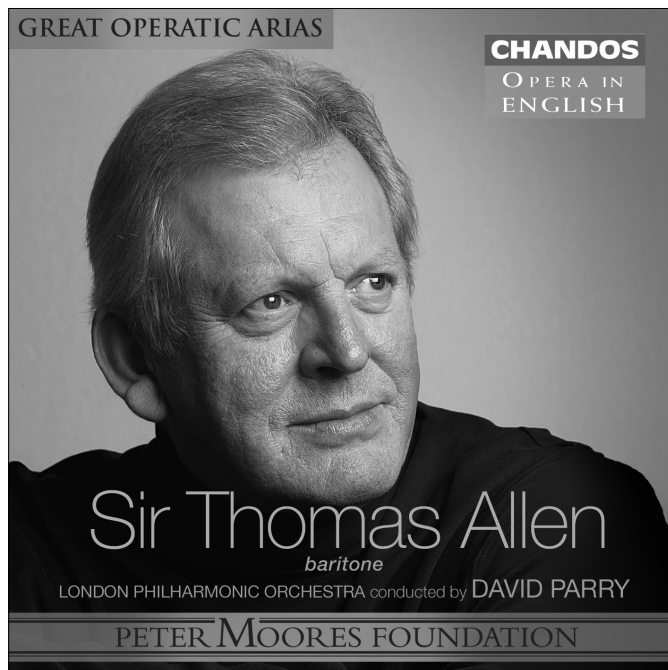
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On session: Susan Gritton

On session: Claire Rutter



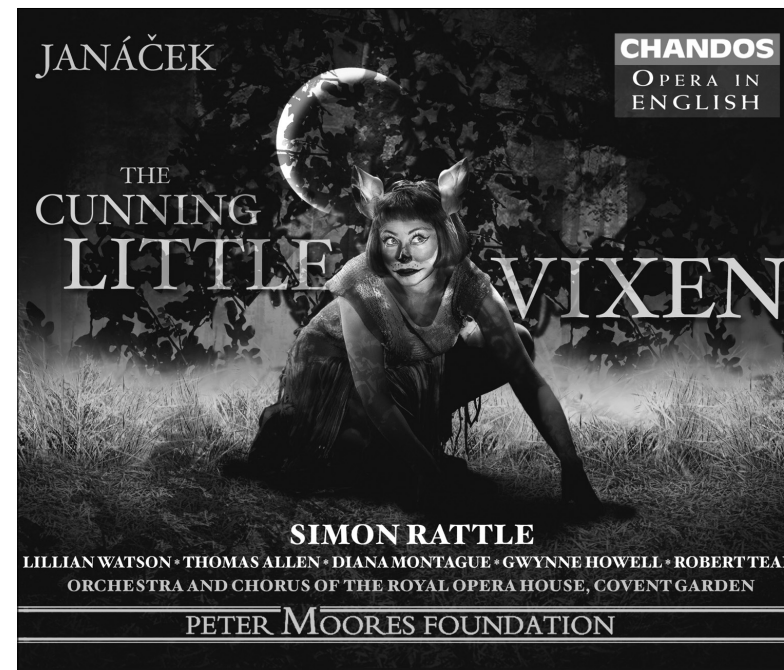
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GREAT OPERATIC ARIAS

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Sir Thomas Allen Volume 2

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
<i>from The Magic Flute</i>
1 'I'm sure that there could never be' 2:52</p> | <p>Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
<i>from The Magic Flute</i>
9 'A man in search of truth and beauty' 3:12
with Susan Gritton soprano</p> |
| <p>2 <i>from The Marriage of Figaro</i>
'Here's an end to your life as a rover' 3:51</p> | <p>10 <i>from Don Giovanni</i>
'Now that the wine has stopped them from thinking' 1:29</p> |
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'God who has brought us together' 5:41
with Gwyn Hughes Jones tenor
Philip Tebb bass • Geoffrey Mitchell Choir</p> | <p>Giuseppe Verdi
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12 'My last day has dawned for ever' 12:13
with Gwyn Hughes Jones tenor</p> |
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'Treachery!' – 'When you are old and full of tears' 5:16</p> | <p>Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
<i>from The Magic Flute</i>
13 'Pa-pa-ge-na Papagena' 2:38
with Susan Gritton soprano</p> |
| <p>6 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
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| <p>Giuseppe Verdi
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with Claire Rutter soprano</p> | <p>Philharmonia Orchestra
David Parry</p> |

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