



sempre libera

ANNA NETREBKO

Mahler Chamber Orchestra

CLAUDIO ABBADO



SUPER AUDIO CD

SURROUND

GIUSEPPE VERDI (1813-1901)

La traviata

- [1] No. 3 Scena ed Aria: "È strano! è strano! – [4'55]
Ah, fors'è lui – Folle! Delirio vano è questo!"
- [2] "Sempre libera" [3'39]
(Violetta, Alfredo)

VINCENZO BELLINI (1801-1835)

La sonnambula

- [3] No. 12 Scena ed Aria finale: [5'38]
"Ah! se una volta sola rivederlo potessi"
- [4] "Ah! Non credea mirarti" [4'47]
- [5] "Ah! non giunge uman pensiero" [2'41]
(Amina, Elvino, Coro)

I puritani

- [6] No. 7 Scena ed Aria: [4'36]
"O rendetemi la speme – Qui la voce sua soave"
- [7] "Ah! tu sorridi e asciughi il pianto!" [4'02]
- [8] "Vien, diletto, è in ciel la luna!" [2'57]
(Elvira, Giorgio, Riccardo)

GAETANO DONIZETTI (1797–1848)

Lucia di Lammermoor

- [9] No. 14 Scena ed Aria: "O giusto cielo!" – "Il dolce suono" . . [3'18]
[10] "Ohimè! ... sorge il tremendo fantasma" [3'15]
[11] "Ardon gli incensi" [5'01]
[12] "Spargi d'amaro pianto" [3'37]

(Coro, Lucia, Raimondo, Enrico)

GIUSEPPE VERDI

Otello

- [13] "Era più calmo?" – "Mia madre aveva una povera ancella" . . [5'00]
[14] "Piangea cantando nell'erma landa" [7'04]
[15] "Ave Maria" [5'17]

(Emilia, Desdemona)

Encore:

GIACOMO PUCCINI (1858–1924)

Gianni Schicchi

- [16] "O mio babbino caro" [2'51]

(Lauretta)

ANNA NETREBKO, soprano

Sara Mingardo, mezzo-soprano (*Emilia*)

Saimir Pirgu, tenor (*Alfredo, Elvino*)

Nicola Ulivieri, bass-baritone (*Riccardo, Enrico*)

Andrea Concetti, bass (*Giorgio, Raimondo*)

Sascha Reckert, glass harmonica (Glasharmonika/harmonica de verres)

Coro Sinfonico di Milano Giuseppe Verdi

Chorus Master/Einstudierung/direction: Romano Gandolfi

Mahler Chamber Orchestra

CLAUDIO ABBADO



MAHLER CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Chiara Tonelli, *flute* · Ulrich Biersack, *piccolo*

Stefania Morselli, *2nd flute (Otello, Lucia)*

Mizuho Yoshii, *oboe (hautbois)*

Emma Schied, *cor anglais (english horn)*

Romain Guyot · Alexander Eissele, *clarinet*

Karoline Schick · Chiara Santi, *bassoon*

Gianfranco Dini · Markus Bruggaier

Thomas Schulze · Fritz Pahlmann, *horn (cor)*

Christopher Dicken · Bernhard Ostertag, *trumpet*

Ricardo Casero · Robb Tooley · Wolfgang Tischhart, *trombone*

Michael Cunningham, *tuba*

Robert Kendell, *timpani*

Gianluca Saveri · Mihaly Kaszas, *percussion*

Julie Palloc, *harp*

Sascha Reckert, *glass harmonica*

Antonello Manacorda · Cindy Albracht · Isabelle Briner

Markus Däunert · Serguei Galaktionov · Meesun Hong

May Kunstovny · Naoko Ogihara · Geoffroy Schied

Henja Semmler, *violin I*

Heather Cottrell · Jana Ludvíčková · Daniel Möller

Naomi Peters · Riikka Sundqvist · Mette Tjaerby

Akemi Uchida · Katarzyna Zawalska, *violin II*

Béatrice Muthélet · Susanne Lerche · Stefano Marcocchi

Catharina Meyer · Delphine Tissot · Verena Wehling, *viola (alto)*

Konstantin Pfiz · Raphael Bell · Natalie Caron

Stefano Guarino · Philipp von Steinaecker, *cello*

Paolo Borsarelli · Frank Dolman · Anita Mazzantini, *double bass*

"sempre libera"



- Anna Netrebko's second Aria Recital

The world of western culture has long been familiar with the cliché of the tart with a heart at least from the time of the Belle Watling episode in Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*, but it is presumably only in the world of opera that prostitutes have to forgo the love of their lives out of consideration for the moral sensibilities of their middle-class fathers-in-law.

Against this background the story of Violetta Valéry in Verdi's *La traviata* – literally, "The Woman Who Has Strayed" – may seem difficult for a modern audience to swallow. But is the motif of renunciation really the work's central theme? Is it not rather something that is even more topical now than it was in Verdi's day, namely, the conflict between sexual freedom and the desire for love? It is around this conflict that Violetta's inner monologue revolves at the end of the opening act. The party is over, the guests have all left. Violetta is confused: can what she feels for Alfredo really be love? For a moment she abandons herself to this feeling, but then pulls herself together again. No, it is all an illusion! The life that is still left to her shall be one long frenzy of delight. "Sempre libera" – always free, always ready for new adventures.

"Sempre libera" is a desperate hymn to sexual freedom that demands far more than just an actress in whom we can readily believe. It also needs a virtuoso singer in full command of all the subtleties of the classical bel canto style. Verdi has used many grace notes to ornament the frenzy of delight that Violetta conjures up here, and many an international diva has come to grief over these passages. But the scene is a test of every soprano's nerves as it ends on a high E flat. Although Verdi did not in fact write this climactic note, it soon gained acceptance in the work's performing tradition and, in spite of all the arguments to the contrary, singers now regard it as a point of honour to include it. From the listener's point of view, of course, the high E flat is a true climax, representing the ultimate in intensity, which is why it was a must for Anna Netrebko when she came to record this recital. "I don't think I've ever sung so many top E flats as I did at these recording sessions," the singer admitted in an interview, "but Maestro Abbado and the wonderful orchestra helped me to sing better than I've ever done before."

It is not just this scene that encourages Anna Netrebko to describe Violetta as the most challenging role in her repertory: "It is incredibly demanding in terms of vocal technique, as you basically need four different types of voice – one for each act and scene. As an actress, too, you have to give it everything you've got. Violetta is a courtesan, and she is terminally ill. You have to love with her, suffer with her and die with her. A singer who does this always pays for it

with her voice: every soprano who abandons herself completely to the role will confirm this."

It is unnecessary to repeat the details of the Russian soprano's great success story. Ever since her sensational début as Donna Anna in the 2002 Salzburg Festival production of *Don Giovanni*, Anna Netrebko's name has rarely been out of the limelight.

How can such a mass impact be explained? Certainly not with hackneyed labels such as "the new Callas" or with empty phrases such as "the most beautiful voice in the world". In interviews, Anna Netrebko reacts to such superlatives with a healthy self-awareness. She knows what she can do and where her limitations currently lie. And she also knows what others can do and what they have done in the past. She speaks of Callas with tremendous respect ("She's unique and will always be unique, there's no one else like her"), but she is equally generous in her praise of two other sopranos, Mirella Freni ("Whenever I've been listening to her, I always sing better myself") and Renata Scot-

to, from whom she picked up many important ideas relating to the bel canto repertory. In this sense, Anna Netrebko's second solo recital, *Sempre libera*, is a kind of homage to her great predecessors.

It was originally planned as a pure bel canto recital, but Claudio Abbado then suggested that they should include Desdemona's great scene from Verdi's *Otello*. The young Russian soprano was initially somewhat sceptical: she had not



sung the role before, quite apart from the fact that the tessitura is substantially lower than that of the bravura roles of the bel canto repertory. But at the same time she felt in such safe hands with Abbado and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra that she decided to accept the challenge. And she immediately rose to it in the most convincing manner imaginable. Indeed, this may help to explain the singer's extraordinary qualities: her voice has the lyrical steadiness for Desdemona's "Ave Maria" and Lauretta's "O mio babbino caro", but it also has the colours and flexibility needed for the great bravura roles of the bel canto repertory.

Anna Netrebko had sung Donizetti's Lucia on stage only a few weeks before these recording sessions. "This was Netrebko's show," wrote the *San Francisco Chronicle* of Marthe Keller's production at the Los Angeles Opera, "and the tumultuous ovation that greeted her at the end was evidence of that. With this 'Lucia' she has added one more jewel to the glorious strands of her still burgeoning career." The present album includes the famous Mad Scene, recorded here in a version with glass harmonica, rather than the traditional flute. Reviewing the Los Angeles production, the critic of the *San Francisco Chronicle* wrote that "Netrebko's coloratura was note-perfect, each melodic phrase and glittering roulade precise and full-bodied. Her dynamic range was remarkable, from a piercing fortissimo to the merest whisper, and she exploited it all for dramatic effect. At one unforgettable juncture, she opened her mouth wide but let only the smallest sound escape – a virtuoso gesture of deep-rooted horror."

Thomas Voigt

(Translation: Stewart Spencer)





La traviata

Paris, around 1840. At the end of a glittering party, the consumptive courtesan Violetta Valéry remains behind in her salon and reflects on her encounter with the young Alfredo Germont. What is this strange emotion that she feels? Can it be love? But she shrugs off the idea. She means to remain free (“Sempre libera”), free for all the pleasures that her short life still has to offer her.

La sonnambula

Anna Netrebko has described Bellini’s sleepwalking heroine Amina as an innocent young woman “who unfortunately has the bad habit of turning up in strange men’s bedrooms at night”. After one such incident she is repudiated by her fiancé Elvino, but when, shortly afterwards, he sees her walking in her sleep, he realizes that she is innocent. Nothing stands in the way of their wedding any longer, and Amina sings of her happiness.

I puritani

I puritani is set around 1650, at the time of the English Civil War. The scene is a Puritan stronghold near Plymouth. Elvira, the daughter of the Puritan governor general Gualtiero Walton, goes mad when she thinks that her fiancé Arturo has been unfaithful to her. Her uncle, Sir Giorgio, and a Puritan colonel, Sir Riccardo, who has had to renounce her hand, attempt to restore the confused Elvira to her senses.

Lucia di Lammermoor

Scotland, at the end of the 17th century. In response to tremendous pressure from her brother Enrico, Lucia renounces her love of Edgardo, her brother's mortal enemy, and agrees to marry Lord Arturo Bucklaw. But she goes mad with grief and murders Arturo on their wedding night. In a great Mad Scene she fantasizes about her marriage to Edgardo in the presence of her brother, her tutor Raimondo and the assembled wedding guests.

Otello

Cyprus, at the end of the 15th century. In order to avenge the slight that he feels when Otello passes him over and promotes Cassio to the rank of captain in his place, Iago persuades Otello that Cassio is having an affair with his wife Desdemona. After Otello has publicly exposed her, Desdemona prepares to retire for the night in the presence of her confidante, Emilia. Filled with sombre forebodings, she recalls the sad song of the willow, then bids goodnight to Emilia and offers up an Ave Maria.

Gianni Schicchi

Florence, in 1299. Buoso Donati has died. In order to punish his covetous kinsfolk for their greed, he has left everything to the monks. In this hopeless situation, the young Rinuccio calls on the help of his girlfriend Lauretta and her father, the cunning Gianni Schicchi. The latter wants nothing to do with the affair: "For these people? No, no, no!" But Lauretta begs him to help them – for the sake of her love of Rinuccio.

»sempre libera«



- Anna Netrebkos zweites Arien-Recital

Dass Huren oft ein großes Herz haben, weiß die westliche Kulturwelt spätestens seit der Episode mit Belle Watling in Margaret Mitchells »Vom Winde verweht«. Dass sie aber aus Rücksicht auf die Moralvorstellungen spießiger Schwiegerväter auf die Liebe ihres Lebens verzichten, das gibt's wahrscheinlich nur in der Oper ... Vor diesem Hintergrund scheint die Geschichte der Violetta Valéry alias »La traviata« (»Die vom Wege Abgeirrte«) für ein heutiges Publikum schwer nachvollziehbar. Aber ist das Entsagungs-Motiv wirklich das zentrale Thema der Oper? Geht es nicht vielmehr um einen Stoff, der heute noch aktueller ist als zu Verdis Zeit, um den Konflikt zwischen sexueller Freiheit und der Sehnsucht nach Liebe?

Dieser Konflikt ist das Thema des inneren Monologs der Violetta am Ende des ersten Aktes. Das Fest ist vorbei, die Gäste sind gegangen. Violetta ist verwirrt: Sollte das, was sie für Alfredo empfindet, wirklich Liebe sein? Sie gibt sich dem Gefühl einen Moment lang hin, reißt sich aber wieder los. Nein, alles Illusion! Das Leben, das ihr noch bleibt, soll ein einziger Rausch der Lust sein. »Sempre libera!«, immer frei, immer zu neuen Abenteuern.

»Sempre libera«, diese verzweifelte Hymne auf sexuelle Freiheit, fordert weit mehr als eine glaubwürdige Darstellerin. Nämlich eine Gesangsvirtuosin, die alle Feinheiten des klassischen Belcanto beherrscht. Denn Verdi hat den Taumel der Lust, den Violetta hier beschwört, mit vielen kleinen Ziernoten ornamentiert, über die schon etliche Diven von Weltrang gestolpert sind. Und was die Szene für jede Sängerin zur Nervenkiste macht: Am Schluss geht es rauf aufs hohe Es. Verdi hat diese Extremnote zwar nicht notiert, aber sie hat sich in der Aufführungstradition rasch durchgesetzt, gilt allen Gegenargumenten zum Trotz als »Ehrensache«. Aus der Perspektive des Hörers jedenfalls bedeutet das hohe Es einen wirklichen Höhepunkt, das letzte Quantum an Intensität. Und schon deshalb war es auch für Anna Netrebko bei der Aufnahme des vorliegenden Recitals ein »Muss«. »Ich glaube, ich habe in meinem Leben noch nie so viele hohe Es gesungen wie bei diesen Aufnahmesitzungen«, gestand die Sängerin in einem Interview, »doch Maestro Abbado und das wunderbare Orchester haben mir geholfen, besser zu singen als je zuvor.«

Nicht allein wegen dieser Szene hat Anna Netrebko die Traviata wiederholt als die anspruchsvollste Partie ihres Repertoires bezeichnet: »Sie ist gesangstechnisch ungeheuer fordernd, weil man im Grunde vier verschiedene Stimmen braucht – für jeden Akt und jedes Bild eine andere. Und darstellerisch muss man alles geben, was man hat. Violetta ist eine Kurtisane, und sie ist todkrank. Man muss mir ihr lieben, mit ihr leiden und mit ihr sterben. Wer das tut, bezahlt auch

immer mit der Stimme dafür, das wird jede Sängerin bestätigen, die sich dieser Rolle mit Haut und Haaren ausgeliefert hat.«

Die große Erfolgsstory der russischen Sopranistin muss an dieser Stelle nicht wiederholt werden: Seit ihrem sensationellen Salzburg-Debüt (2002 als Donna Anna in »Don Giovanni«) ist Anna Netrebko in den Medien so präsent wie kaum eine andere Klassik-Künstlerin.

Wie lässt sich solche Breitenwirkung erklären? Sicher nicht mit völlig verbrauchten Etiketten wie »Die neue Callas« oder mit Worthülsen wie »die schönste Stimme der Welt«. Auf solche Superlative antwortet Anna Netrebko in Interviews mit realistischer Selbsteinschätzung. Sie weiß, was sie kann und wo (vorerst) ihre Grenzen liegen. Und genauso weiß sie, was andere können oder gekonnt haben. Mit größtem Respekt spricht sie von der Callas (»Sie ist und bleibt einmalig, es gibt keine Zweite wie sie«), von Mirella Freni (»Wenn ich sie gehört habe, singe ich besser«) und von Renata Scotto, von der

sie Wesentliches zur Gestaltung ihrer Belcanto-Partien lernte. Insofern ist »Sempre libera«, das zweite Solo-Album der Netrebko, auch eine Art Hommage an ihre großen Vorgängerinnen.

Ursprünglich hätte es ein reines Belcanto-Recital werden sollen; doch dann machte Claudio Abbado den Vorschlag, noch die große Szene der Desdemona aus Verdis »Otello« hinzuzunehmen. Die junge Sopranistin war zu-



nächst skeptisch: Sie hatte die Partie noch nie gesungen, außerdem liegt die Desdemona insgesamt wesentlich tiefer als die Bravourpartien des Belcanto. Andererseits fühlte sie sich bei Abbado und dem Mahler Chamber Orchestra so sicher, dass sie sich auch dieser Herausforderung stellte – und auf Anhieb überzeugte. Und vielleicht liegt gerade darin das Außergewöhnliche dieser Sängerin: Ihre Stimme hat das lyrische Ebenmaß für das *Ave Maria* der Desdemona oder für die Arietta der Lauretta («O mio babbino caro»), aber auch die Farben und die Flexibilität für die großen Bravourpartien des Belcanto.

Donizettis Lucia hatte sie wenige Wochen vor den Aufnahmesitzungen auf der Bühne gesungen, in Marthe Kellers Inszenierung an der Los Angeles Opera. »Das war Netrebkos Show«, stand anderntags im »San Francisco Chronicle« zu lesen, »und der stürmische Jubel, der sie am Ende empfing, war der Beweis. Diese ›Lucia‹ ist ein weiterer Höhepunkt ihrer steilen Karriere.« Über die berühmte Wahnsinnsszene, die in der vorliegenden Aufnahme in einer Fassung mit Glasharmonika (statt der traditionellen Flöte) erklingt, hieß es in derselben Kritik: »Netrebkos Koloraturen waren Note für Note perfekt, jede melodische Phrase, jeder perlende Lauf präzise und wohlklingend. Den enormen dynamischen Umfang ihrer Stimme – vom schneidenden Fortissimo bis zum reinen Flüstern – stellte sie ganz in den Dienst des dramatischen Ausdrucks. Unvergesslich bleibt, wie sie an einer Stelle den Mund weit aufriss, aber nur den leisesten Ton vernehmen ließ – eine grandiose Darstellung tiefen Entsetzens.«

Thomas Voigt



«sempre libera»



- le deuxième récital d'Anna Netrebko

Depuis l'exemple de Belle Watling, ce personnage du roman de Margaret Mitchell *Autant en emporte le vent*, notre culture occidentale a définitivement accepté l'idée que les prostituées ont souvent un grand cœur. Mais qu'une courtisane renonce à l'amour de sa vie par respect des principes moraux de beaux-pères petit-bourgeois, n'est certainement possible qu'à l'opéra.

A cet égard, l'histoire de Violette Valéry alias *La traviata* («La Dévoyée») apparaît peu vraisemblable au public d'aujourd'hui. Mais après tout, le renoncement est-il vraiment le thème central de l'ouvrage? Ne serait-ce plutôt le conflit, bien plus actuel aujourd'hui qu'à l'époque de Verdi, que se livrent liberté sexuelle et quête de l'amour? Ce conflit est, en tous les cas, le thème du monologue intérieur de Violette à la fin du premier acte. La fête est terminée, les convives sont partis. Violette est décontenancée. Est-il possible que ce qu'elle éprouve pour Alfred soit de l'amour? Elle se laisse un moment griser par ce sentiment avant de se reprendre. Non, tout ceci n'est qu'illusion! Les jours qu'il lui reste à vivre ne doivent être qu'une fuite dans le plaisir. «Sempre libera!»: libre toujours, sans cesse à l'affût d'aventures nouvelles.

Hymne désespéré à la liberté sexuelle, «Sempre libera» exige bien plus qu'une interprète crédible. Cet air demande, à vrai dire, une virtuose maîtrisant les plus subtiles nuances du bel canto classique. Verdi traduit l'ivresse du plaisir, que Violette invoque ici, par une succession de petits ornements sur lesquels nombre de divas fameuses se sont cassé les dents. Sans oublier que l'air comporte, à la fin, un contre-mi bémol. De quoi donner des sueurs froides à n'importe quelle chanteuse. Si Verdi n'a pas expressément écrit cette note, celle-ci s'est vite imposée comme une coutume, une sorte de «point d'honneur» résistant à toutes les objections. Pour l'auditeur, ce contre-mi bémol représente en tous les cas un véritable point culminant, l'ultime sommet d'intensité. En enregistrant cet air, Anna Netrebko dut, elle aussi, se prêter au jeu. «Je crois bien n'avoir, de toute ma vie, jamais chanté autant de contre-mi bémol que lors de cet enregistrement», avoua la chanteuse dans une interview. «Il faut dire que le maestro Abbado et l'orchestre, proprement magique, m'ont permis de me surpasser.»

Cet air n'est cependant pas la seule raison pour laquelle Anna Netrebko considère ce rôle comme le plus exigeant de son répertoire: «Il est affreusement difficile d'un point de vue technique, car il demande, à y regarder de près, quatre différents types de voix: un par tableau. Et, dramatiquement, l'interprète doit tout donner. Violette est une courtisane, atteinte d'un mal incurable. Il faut aimer, souffrir et mourir avec elle. L'interprète qui accepte cela

met sa propre voix en jeu. Toute chanteuse qui s'est jetée corps et âme dans le rôle vous le dira.»

Nul besoin de revenir sur la *success story* de la soprano russe: depuis ses débuts fracassants au Festival de Salzbourg 2002, où elle interprétait Donna Anna de *Don Giovanni*, il n'est guère d'artiste classique aussi présente dans les médias.

Comment expliquer un tel engouement? Certainement pas en recourant à des étiquettes aussi galvaudées que «la nouvelle Callas» ou à des formules toutes faites telles que «la plus belle voix du monde». Face à de tels superlatifs, Anna Netrebko fait montre, dans ses interviews, d'une parfaite lucidité. Elle connaît ses capacités et ses (actuelles) limites. De même, elle connaît parfaitement les capacités des autres cantatrices, présentes ou passées. Aussi exprime-t-elle un immense respect pour la Callas («Elle reste un cas unique. Il n'y en a pas d'autre comme elle»), pour Mirella Freni («Lorsque je l'écoute, je chante mieux») ainsi que pour Renata Scottò, dont elle a appris des choses essen-

tielles pour appréhender les rôles belcantistes. En ce sens, «Sempre libera», deuxième récital d'Anna Netrebko, est aussi un hommage rendu à ses illustres devancières.

A l'origine, cet album ne devait comporter que des airs belcantistes. Mais Claudio Abbado suggéra d'y ajouter le grand air de Desdémone d'*Otello*. La jeune soprano se montra tout d'abord sceptique: elle n'avait encore jamais



chanté ce rôle qui, faut-il le rappeler, évolue dans un registre nettement plus grave que les rôles de bravoure du répertoire belcantiste. Mais Abbado et le Mahler Chamber Orchestra lui donnaient une telle confiance qu'Anna Netrebko accepta finalement de relever le défi... pour convaincre d'entrée. Là réside peut-être ce qui fait de cette cantatrice une artiste hors normes. Sa voix possède l'équilibre lyrique que requiert l'Ave Maria de Desdémone ou l'ariette de Lauretta («O mio babbino caro»), mais également les couleurs et la flexibilité qu'exigent les grands rôles de bravoure du bel canto.

Quelques semaines avant cet enregistrement, Anna Netrebko avait chanté la Lucia de Donizetti à l'Opéra de Los Angeles, dans une mise en scène de Marthe Keller. On pouvait lire le lendemain dans le *San Francisco Chronicle*: «Ce fut un show Netrebko... la tempête d'ovations qui la salua à la fin en fut la meilleure preuve. Sa Lucia constitue un joyau de plus dans une carrière qui ne fait que commencer». Le même critique écrivit sur sa fameuse «scène de la folie» – dont le présent enregistrement propose une version dans laquelle l'harmonica de verres remplace l'habituelle flûte: «Sa voix de colorature rend justice à chaque note, négociant chaque phrase mélodique, chaque roulade virtuose avec un mélange de précision et de densité. Elle exploite son exceptionnel éventail dynamique – du fortissimo le plus puissant au murmure le plus ténu – pour obtenir un impact dramatique maximal. Dans un passage inoubliable, elle ouvre la bouche toute grande pour émettre un pianissimo à peine audible: figure virtuose traduisant une insondable terreur.»



Thomas Voigt

(Traduction: Hugues Mousseau)

La traviata

L'action se situe à Paris vers 1840. Restée seule dans son salon à l'issue d'une fête somptueuse, Violetta Valéry, courtisane atteinte de phthisie, songe à sa rencontre avec le jeune Alfred Germont. Est-il possible que l'étrange sensation qu'elle ressent soit de l'amour? Elle tente de repousser cette idée car elle veut demeurer libre, («Sempre libera»), libre surtout de profiter de tous les plaisirs que lui offre le peu de temps qu'il lui reste à vivre.

La sonnambula

Anna Netrebko décrit la somnambule Amina comme une innocente jeune fille «qui a pour fâcheuse habitude de surgir la nuit dans la chambre d'hommes qu'elle ne connaît pas». Amina se voit pour cette raison répudiée par son fiancé Elvino. Mais étant peu après le témoin de l'une de ses crises de somnambulisme, celui-ci comprend qu'elle est innocente. Le mariage, de ce fait, est sauvé et Amina laisse libre cours à son bonheur.

I puritani

L'action se situe pendant la guerre civile anglaise, vers 1650, dans une forteresse des environs de Plymouth tenue par les puritains. Elvire, fille de lord Walter Walton, gouverneur de la forteresse, perd la raison du fait de l'infidélité supposée de son fiancé Arthur. Sir George (son oncle) et Sir Richard (chef militaire qui dut renoncer à la main d'Elvire) tentent de la ramener dans le monde réel.

Lucia di Lammermoor

L'action se situe en Ecosse à la fin du XVII^e siècle. Sur la pression de son frère Henry, Lucia a renoncé à l'amour qu'elle éprouve pour Edgar, ennemi mortel de son frère, et a accepté d'épouser Lord Arthur. Rendue folle de chagrin, elle poignarde Arthur au cours de sa nuit de noces. Dans une vaste «scène de la folie», en présence d'Henry, du chapelain Raymond et de l'ensemble des convives, Lucia se voit «en rêve» épouser Edgar.

Otello

L'action se situe à Chypre à la fin du XV^e siècle. Pour se venger d'Otello qui vient de nommer Cassio – et non lui – au poste de capitaine, Iago insinue à Otello que Cassio entretient une liaison avec son épouse Desdémone. Après qu'Otello l'ait publiquement mise en cause, Desdémone se prépare pour la nuit en compagnie de sa suivante Emilia. Habitée par de sombres pressentiments, Desdémone se remémore le triste air du saule, prend congé d'Emilia et récite un Ave Maria.

Gianni Schicchi

Florence en 1299. Buoso Donati est mort, léguant la totalité de ses biens à des moines pour punir la cupidité des membres de sa famille. Devant cette situation, le jeune Rinuccio fait appel à sa fiancée Lauretta et à son père, le rusé Gianni Schicchi. Celui-ci ne veut rien entendre: «Voler au secours de ces vautours? Jamais.» Lauretta le supplie toutefois de l'aider au nom de l'amour qu'elle éprouve pour Rinuccio.

Die deutschen Übersetzungen der Liedtexte stehen auf der Internetseite
»www.deutsche Grammophon.com/
netrebko-semprelibera«
unter »SUNG TEXTS DOWNLOAD«.
Das Passwort ist 170470.

GIUSEPPE VERDI

La traviata

Libretto: Francesco Maria Piave
Atto I, N. 3 Scena ed Aria

VIOLETTA

- 1 È strano! è strano!
In core scolpiti ho quegli accenti!
Saria per me sventura un serio amore?
Che risolvi, o turbata anima mia?
Null'uomo ancora t'accendeva...
Oh, gioia
ch'io non conobbi,
esser amata amando!
E sdegnarla poss'io
per l'aride follie del viver mio?

Ah, fors'è lui che l'anima
solinga ne' tumulti
godea sovente pingere
de' suoi colori occulti.
Lui, che modesto e vigile
all'egre soglie accese,
e nuova febbre accese
destandomi all'amor!

A quell'amor ch'è palpito
dell'universo intero,
misterioso, altero,
croce e delizia al cor.

Follie! Delirio vano è questo!
Povera donna, sola, abbandonata
in questo popoloso deserto
che appellano Parigi,
che spero or più? Che far degg'io?
Gioire!
Di voluttà ne' vortici perir!
Gioir!

On trouvera la traduction française des textes des
mélodies sur Internet à l'adresse suivante:
www.deutsche Grammophon.com/
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Cliquer sur SING TEXTS DOWNLOAD.
Le mot de passe est 170470.

GIUSEPPE VERDI

La traviata

Libretto: Francesco Maria Piave
Act I, No. 3 Scene and Aria

VIOLETTA

How strange it is ... how strange!
Those words are carved upon my heart!
Would a true love bring me misfortune?
What do you think, o my troubled spirit?
No man before kindled a flame like this.
Oh, joy ...
I never knew ...
To love and to be loved!
Can I disdain this
for a life of sterile pleasure?

Was this the man my heart,
alone in the crowd,
delighted many times to paint
in vague, mysterious colours?
This man, so watchful yet retiring,
who haunted my sick-bed
and turned my fever
into the burning flame of love!

That love,
the pulse of the whole world,
mysterious, unattainable,
the torment and delight of my heart.

It's madness! It's empty delirium!
A poor, lonely woman
abandoned in this teeming desert
they call Paris!
What can I hope? What should I do?
Enjoy myself! Plunge into the vortex
of pleasure and drown there!
Enjoy myself!

- ② Sempre libera degg'io
folleggiare di gioia in gioia,
vo' che scorra il viver mio
pei sentieri del piacer.
Nasca il giorno, o il giorno muoia,
sempre lieta ne' ritrovi,
a diletti sempre nuovi
dee volare il mio pensier.

ALFREDO

(sotto al balcone)

Amor è palpito
dell'universo intero,
misterioso, altero,
croce e delizia al cor.

VIOLETTA

Oh!

Oh! Amore!

Follie!

Gioir!

Sempre libera degg'io, ecc.

VINCENZO BELLINI

La sonnambula

Libretto: Felice Romani

Atto II, N. 12 Scena ed Aria finale

AMINA

- ③ Ah! se una volta sola
rivederlo potessi, anzi che all'ara
altra sposa ei guidasse!

Vana speranza! Io sento
suonar la sacra squilla... al tempio ei muove...
Ah! l'ho perduto... e pur... rea non son io.

ELVINO, CORO

Tenero cor!

Free and aimless I must flutter
from pleasure to pleasure,
skimming the surface
of life's primrose path.
As each day dawns,
as each day dies,
gaily I turn to the new delights
that make my spirit soar.

ALFREDO

(outside the window)

Love is the pulse
of the whole world,
mysterious, unattainable,
the torment and delight of my heart.

VIOLETTA

Oh!

Yes! Love!

It's madness!

Pleasure!

Free and aimless I must flutter, etc.

Translation: © 1977/rev. 1992 DGG

VINCENZO BELLINI

La sonnambula

Libretto: Felice Romani

Act II, No. 12 Scene and Final Aria

AMINA

Oh! If I could only
see him once more before he leads
another bride to the altar!

Vain hope! I can hear
the church bell... He is on his way to church...
Alas, I have lost him... yet have I done nothing
wrong.

ELVINO, CHORUS

Tender heart!

ELVIRA

Qui la voce sua soave
mi chiamava...
e poi spari.
Qui giurava esser fedele,
qui il giurava,
e poi crudele
mi fuggì!

Ah! mai più qui assorti insieme
nella gioia de' sospir.
Ah! rendetemi la speme,
o lasciatemi morir.

- 7 Ah! tu sorridi e asciughi il pianto!
A Imene mi guidi... al ballo, al canto!
Ognun s'appresta a nozze, a festa,
e meco in danze esulterà.
A festa!

(a Giorgio)

Tu pur meco danzerai?
Vieni a nozze. Vien.
(si volge e vede Riccardo, lo prende per mano)
Egli piange!

RICCARDO

(Oh, Dio!)

GIORGIO

(Oh, Dio!)

ELVIRA

(a Giorgio)
Egli piange... forse amò?
Piange... amò!

GIORGIO, RICCARDO
(Or chi il pianto frenar può?
Chi frenar lo può?)

ELVIRA

(a Riccardo)
M'odi, e dimmi: amasti mai?

ELVIRA

Here his sweet voice
called me ...
and then vanished.
Here he swore to be true,
here he swore it,
and then, cruel man,
he fled!

Ah! Never more shall we share the rapture
of the joys of desire.
Ah! Give me back hope,
or let me die.

Ah! You are smiling and wiping away a tear!
You are taking me to be married ... to the
dancing, to the singing!

Let everyone come to the wedding, to the festivities,
and rejoice with me in dancing.
To the festivities!

(to Giorgio)

Will you dance with me too?
Come to the wedding. Come.
(turns and sees Riccardo, takes his hand)
He is weeping!

RICCARDO

(Oh God!)

GIORGIO

(Oh God!)

ELVIRA

(to Giorgio)
He is weeping ... perhaps he has been in love?
He is weeping ... he has been in love!

GIORGIO, RICCARDO
(Who can now refrain from weeping?
Who can refrain from weeping?)

ELVIRA

(to Riccardo)
Listen to me, and tell me: have you ever been in love?

RICCARDO

Gli occhi affissa sul mio volto,
ben mi guarda e lo vedrai...

ELVIRA

Ah! se piangi... ancor tu sai
che un cor fido nell'amor
sempre vive nel dolor!

GIORGIO

(abbracciandola)

Deh! t'acqueta, o mia diletta.
Tregua al duol dal cielo aspetta.

ELVIRA

Mai!

RICCARDO, GIORGIO

Clemente il ciel ti fia.
L'ingrato oblia, ah, sì!

ELVIRA

Ah, mai più ti rivedrò.
Ah! toglietemi la vita
o rendetemi il mio amor!

Ah, toglietemi la vita, ecc.

RICCARDO, GIORGIO

Ah! sì fa mia la sua ferita,
mi squarcia il cor.
Sì fa mia la sua ferita,
mi dispera e squarcia il cor.

ELVIRA

- B** Vien, diletto, è in ciel la luna!
Tutto tace intorno, intorno;
finché spunti in cielo il giorno,
ah, vien, ti posa sul mio cor!

Deh! t'affretta, o Arturo mio,
riedi, o caro, alla tua Elvira;
essa piange e ti sospira,
vien, o caro, all'amore.

RICCARDO

Fix your eyes on my face,
look at me closely and you will see ...

ELVIRA

Ah! If you weep ... then you know
that when a faithful heart loves
it always lives in pain!

GIORGIO

(embracing her)

Come! Calm yourself, my dear one.
Heaven will send comfort for your sorrow.

ELVIRA

Never!

RICCARDO, GIORGIO

May heaven be merciful to you.
Forget the cruel man, ah, yes!

ELVIRA

Ah! I shall never see you again.
Ah! Take away my life
or give me back my love!

Ah! Take away my life, etc.

RICCARDO, GIORGIO

Ah! Her pain becomes mine,
my heart is breaking.
Her pain becomes mine,
my despairing heart is breaking.

ELVIRA

Come, beloved, the moon is in the sky!
Everything is silent;
until the dawn breaks in the sky,
come, rest on my heart!

Come, hasten, oh my Arturo,
return, oh my darling, to your Elvira;
she weeps and longs for you,
come, oh my darling, to your love.

... all'amor, riedi all'amore!
Artur, ah, riedi al primo amor!

RICCARDO, GIORGIO
Ah! Ricovrarti omai t'addice,
stende notte il cupo orror, sì.

... your love, return to your love!
Arturo, return to your first love!

RICCARDO, GIORGIO
Ah! You should now return to your room,
night is spreading her fearful darkness, yes.

Translation: Decca 1987 Diana Reed
rev. 2001 DGG

GAETANO DONIZETTI **Lucia di Lammermoor**

Libretto: Salvatore Cammarano

Parte seconda, Atto II, N. 14 Scena ed Aria

CORO

- 9 (O giusto cielo!
Par dalla tomba uscita!)

LUCIA

Il dolce suono
mi colpì di sua voce!... Ah, quella voce
m'è qui nel cor discesa!
Edgardo! io ti son resa;
Edgardo!... Ah, Edgardo mio,
fuggita io son da' tuoi nemici... Un gelo
mi serpeggia nel sen... trema ogni fibra!...
Vacilla il piè! Presso la fonte meco
t'assidi alquanto.

- 10 Ohimè!... sorge il tremendo
fantasma e ne separa!...
Ohimè! Edgardo...
Qui ricovriamo, Edgardo, a' piè dell'ara...
Sparsa è di rose! Un'armonia celeste,
di', non ascolti? Ah, l'inno
suona di nozze! Il rito
per noi s'appresta! Oh, me felice!
Edgardo! Edgardo!
Oh, gioia che si sente e non si dice!

- 11 Ardon gli incensi... splendono
le sacre faci intorno.
Ecco il ministro!... Porgimi
la destra... Oh, lieto giorno!

GAETANO DONIZETTI **Lucia di Lammermoor**

Libretto: Salvatore Cammarano

Part Two, Act II, No. 14 Scene and Aria

CHORUS

(Oh, righteous heaven!
She is as if risen from the grave!)

LUCIA

The sweet sound
of his voice captured me!... Oh, that voice
penetrated the depth of my heart!
Edgardo! I am yours again.
Edgardo! ... Ah, my Edgardo,
I fled from your enemies... A shudder
runs through my body... Every fibre trembles!...
My feet give away! There, by the fountain,
sit down with me...

Alas! There rises
the horrible spectre and parts us!
Alas! Edgardo...
Here we find refuge, Edgardo, at the foot of the altar...
It is strewn with roses! Celestial harmonies,
do you not hear them? Ah, it is
the nuptial hymn! The ceremony
is being prepared for us! Oh, how happy I am!
Edgardo! Edgardo!
Oh, what inexpressible joy I feel within me!
The incense is burning... and inside
the holy tapers brightly glow.
The priest is ready!... Give me
your hand... Oh, day of rapture!

Alfin son tua, alfin sei mio,
a me ti dona un Dio...

RAIMONDO, CORO

Abbi, in sì crudo stato,
di lei, Signor, pietà!

LUCIA

Ogni piacer più grato
mi fia con te diviso...
Del ciel clemente un riso
la vita a noi sarà!

12 Spargi d'amaro pianto
il mio terrestre velo,
mentre lassù nel cielo
io pregherò per te...
Al giunger tuo soltanto
fia bello il ciel per me!
Ah sì!

ENRICO

Giorni d'amaro pianto
serba il rimorso a me.

RAIMONDO, CORO

Più raffrenare il pianto
possibile non è.

LUCIA

Ah! Spargi d'amaro pianto, ecc.

ENRICO

Ah! Vita d'amaro pianto
serba il rimorso a me.

RAIMONDO, CORO

Ah! Più raffrenare il pianto
possibile non è.

LUCIA

Ah! Ch'io spiri accanto a te.

At last I am yours, at last you are mine!
A god gave you to me...

RAIMONDO, CHORUS

In such an awful condition!
Have mercy on her, o Lord.

LUCIA

Every pleasure
I shall share with you...
Our life together will be
a smile of clement heaven!

Spread with bitter tears
my earthly remains,
whilst in heaven above
I shall pray for you...
Your coming alone
makes heaven beautiful for me,
Oh yes!

ENRICO

Remorse prepares for me
a life full of bitter tears.

RAIMONDO, CHORUS

To hold back our tears any longer
is impossible.

LUCIA

Spread with bitter tears, etc.

ENRICO

Ah! Remorse prepares for me
a life full of bitter tears.

RAIMONDO, CHORUS

To hold back our tears any longer
is impossible.

LUCIA

Ah, let me die close beside you.

Translation: © 1961/rev. 1992 DGG

GIUSEPPE VERDI

Otello

Libretto: Arrigo Boito

Atto IV

La camera di Desdemona. Letto, inginocchiatoio, tavolo, specchio, sedie. Una lampada arde appesa davanti all'immagine della Madonna che sta al di sopra dell'inginocchiatoio. Porta a destra. È notte. Desdemona, aiutata da Emilia, si prepara per la notte.

EMILIA

13 Era più calmo?

DESDEMONA

Mi pareva. M'ingiunse di coricarmi e d'attendere. Emilia, te ne prego, distendi sul mio letto la mia candida veste nuziale.

(Emilia eseguisce.)

Senti. Se pria di te morir dovessi mi seppellisci con un di quei veli.

EMILIA

Scacciate queste idee.

DESDEMONA

Son mesta, tanto.

(sedendo macchinamente davanti allo specchio)

Mia madre aveva una povera ancella, innamorata e bella.

Era il suo nome

Barbara. Amava

un uom che poi l'abbandonò; cantava una canzone: la canzon del Salice.

(ad Emilia)

Mi disciogli le chiome...

Io questa sera ho la memoria piena di quella cantilena...

14 Piangea cantando nell'erma landa, piangea la mesta...
O Salce! Salce! Salce!
Sedeo chinando

GIUSEPPE VERDI

Otello

Libretto: Arrigo Boito

Act IV

Desdemona's bedroom. A bed, a prie-dieu, a table, a mirror and some chairs. A lighted lamp hangs before the image of the Madonna above the prie-dieu. On the right is a door. It is night. Desdemona, with the assistance of Emilia, is preparing for bed.

EMILIA

Was he calmer?

DESDEMONA

He seemed so to me. He commanded me to go to bed and there await him. Emilia, I pray you, lay upon my bed my white wedding nightgown.

(Emilia does so.)

Listen. If I should die before you, lay me to rest in one of those veils.

EMILIA

Put such thoughts from you.

DESDEMONA

I am so sad, so sad.

(seating herself mechanically before the mirror)

My mother had a poor maidservant, she was in love and pretty;

her name was

Barbara; she loved

a man who then abandoned her. She used to sing a song, the song of "The Willow".

(to Emilia)

Unbind my hair.

This evening my memory is haunted by that old refrain.

"She wept as she sang
on the lonely heath,
the poor girl wept,
O willow, willow, willow!
She sat with her head

sul sen la testa!

O Salce! Salce! Salce!

Cantiamo! il Salce funebre
sarà la mia ghirlanda.

(ad Emilia)

Affrettati; fra poco giunge Otello.

Scorreano i rivi fra le zolle in fior,
gemea quel core affranto,
e dalle ciglia le sgorgava il cor,
l'amara onda del pianto.

O Salce! Salce! Salce!

Cantiamo! Il Salce funebre
sarà la mia ghirlanda.

Scendean l'augelli a vol dai rami cupi
verso quel dolce canto.

E gli occhi suoi piangean tanto, tanto,
da impietosir le rupi.

(ad Emilia, levandosi un anello dal dito)
Riponi quest'anello.

(alzandosi)

Povera Barbara! Solea la storia
con questo semplice suono finir:
Egli era nato per la sua gloria,
io per amar...

(ad Emilia)

Ascolta. Odo un lamento.

(Emilia fa qualche passo.)

Taci. Chi batte a quella porta?

EMILIA

È il vento.

DESDEMONA

Io per amarlo e per morir... Cantiamo!
Salce! Salce! Salce!
Emilia, addio. Come m'ardón le ciglia!
È presagio di pianto. Buona notte.

(Emilia si volge per partire.)

Ah! Emilia, Emilia, addio, Emilia, addio!

(Emilia ritorna e Desdemona l'abbraccia. Emilia esce.)

upon her breast,
willow, willow, willow!

Come sing! Come sing! The green willow
shall be my garland."

(to Emilia)

Make haste; Otello will soon be here.

"The fresh streams ran between the flowery
banks,

she moaned in her grief,
in bitter tears which through her eyelids
sprang her poor heart sought relief.

Willow! Willow! Willow!

Come sing! Come sing! The green willow
shall be my garland.

Down from dark branches flew the birds
towards the singing sweet.

Sufficient were the tears that she did weep
that stones her sorrow shared."

(to Emilia, taking a ring from her finger)

Lay this ring by.

(rising)

Poor Barbara! The story used to end
with this simple phrase:

"He was born for glory,
I to love..."

(to Emilia)

Hark! I heard a moan.

(Emilia takes a step or two.)

Hush ... Who knocks upon that door?

EMILIA

'Tis the wind.

DESDEMONA

"I to love him and to die. Come sing!
Willow! Willow! Willow!"

Emilia, farewell. How mine eyes do itch!
That bodes weeping. Good night.

(Emilia turns to leave.)

Ah! Emilia, Emilia, farewell! Emilia, farewell!

(Emilia returns and Desdemona embraces her. Emilia leaves.)

(all'inginocchiatoio)

- 15 Ave Maria, piena di grazia, eletta fra le spose e le vergini sei tu, sia benedetto il frutto, o benedetta, di tue materne viscere, Gesù. Prega per chi adorando a te si prostra, prega pel peccator, per l'innocente, e pel debole oppresso e pel possente, misero anch'esso, tua pietà dimostra. Prega per chi sotto l'oltraggio piega la fronte e sotto la malvagia sorte; per noi, per noi tu prega, prega sempre e nell'ora della morte nostra.

(Resta ancora inginocchiata e appoggiando la fronte sull'inginocchiatoio ripete mentalmente l'orazione di cui non s'odono che le prime e le ultime parole.)

Ave Maria...
nell'ora della morte...
Ave!... Amen!

GIACOMO PUCCINI Gianni Schicchi

Libretto: Giovacchino Forzano

LAURETTA

- 16 O mio babbino caro,
mi piace, è bello, è bello;
vo' andare in Porta Rossa
a comperar l'anello!
Sì, sì, ci voglio andare!
E se l'amassi indarno,
andrei sul Ponte Vecchio,
ma per buttarmi in Arno!
Mi struggo e mi tormento,
oh Dio, vorrei morir!
Babbo, pietà, pietà!

(kneeling at the prie-dieu)

Hail Mary, full of grace, blessed amongst wives and maids art thou, and blessed is the fruit, o blessed one, of thy maternal womb, Jesu. Pray for those who kneeling adore thee, pray for the sinner, for the innocent and for the weak oppressed, and for the powerful man, who also grieves, thy sweet compassion show. Pray for him who bows beneath injustice and 'neath the blows of cruel destiny; for us, pray thou for us, pray for us always, and at the hour of our death!

(She remains kneeling and, with her head bowed on the prie-dieu, repeats the prayer silently, so that only the first words and the last are audible.)

Hail Mary ...
... and at the hour of our death.
Hail! Amen!

Translation: Decca 1978 Avril Bardoni

GIACOMO PUCCINI Gianni Schicchi

Libretto: Giovacchino Forzano

LAURETTA

Oh, dear daddy,
I like him, he's handsome, he's handsome;
I want to go to Porta Rossa
to buy the ring!
Yes, yes, I want to go there!
And if it's useless to love him,
I'll go to the Ponte Vecchio
and throw myself into the Arno!
I am pining, I am tortured!
Oh God, I could die!
Daddy, have pity, have pity!

Translation: Decca, Kenneth Chalmers

