



Charles Castronovo

VERDI | SCENES & ARIAS

Noble Renegades

CONSTANTINE ORBELIAN
KAUNAS CITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

NOBLE RENEGADES

GIUSEPPE VERDI 1813-1901

SCENES & ARIAS

Don Carlos

- | | |
|---|------|
| 1. Fontainebleau ! Forêt immense et solitaire | 2:08 |
| 2. Je l'ai vue | 2:30 |

I due Foscari

- | | |
|--|------|
| 3. Qui ti rimani | 2:29 |
| 4. Dal più remoto esilio | 2:19 |
| 5. Del consiglio alla presenza ... Odio solo, ed odio atroce | 3:07 |
- with Tomas Pavilionis, Tenor*

Macbeth

- | | |
|--|------|
| 6. O figli, o figli miei ... Ah, la paterna mano | 3:49 |
|--|------|

Un ballo in maschera

- | | |
|---|------|
| 7. Forse la soglia attinse ... Ma se m'è forza perdetti | 5:42 |
|---|------|

I Lombardi

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------|
| 8. O madre mia, che fa colei | 1:20 |
| 9. La mia letizia infondere | 2:11 |
| 10. Oh ! ma pensa, che non puoi | 0:49 |
| 11. Come poteva un angelo | 4:06 |

with Kristin Sampson, Soprano

Luisa Miller

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------|
| 12. Il foglio dunque ? | 2:56 |
| 13. Quando le sere al placido | 3:35 |
| 14. Di me chiedeste | 2:50 |
| 15. L'ara, o l'avello apprestami | 3:35 |

with Tomas Pavilionis, Tenor, Tadas Girininkas, Bass, and Kaunas State Choir

Jérusalem

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------|
| 16. L'infamie ! Prenez ma vie ! | 4:04 |
|---------------------------------|------|

Il corsaro

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| 17. Ah, sì, ben dite | 4:45 |
| 18. Pronti siate a seguitemi | 0:47 |
| 19. Sì, de'corsari il fulmine | 2:52 |

with Kaunas State Choir

Total Running Time 55:58

CHARLES CASTRONOVO Tenor
CONSTANTINE ORBELIAN Conductor
KAUNAS CITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



VERDI'S GUIDANCE

The first time I listened to Giuseppe Verdi's music was when I played an all tenor aria album at 16 years old. Up until then, I spent most of my waking hours listening to the classic rock high notes of Led Zeppelin, The Doors and The Beatles. I was singing and playing guitar in a band and although I could sing well enough, I was convinced that I could not really recreate that smokey and blues sound the music demanded. But after joining the school choir and finding my place in the tenor section, I knew that I should listen to proper classical singing, in particular operatic singing.

The first aria I randomly chose on the disc was the entrance of *Otello*. My jaw dropped at the crash of the first chaotic and raging chords. As I listened to the first notes of the tenor ringing out "Esultate", I immediately realized that this was for me the classical equivalent of the furious and sexual sounds of the rock gods wailing their songs of betrayed hearts, calls to battle and passionate love. My wish to become a rock star immediately vanished as I pictured myself on stage, singing and portraying these tragic and heroic characters in an opera house, not in a smoke-filled club or even in a huge stadium of screaming rock fans.

My first encounter with Verdi in my early career was *La Traviata*, singing the supporting role of Gastone. In the following years, my voice matured into young leading roles. Most importantly for me were Fenton (*Falstaff*) and Alfredo, a role I have now performed over 200 times.

As important as Verdi was to the first part of my career, he became even more prominent as the years passed. There is an unspoken evolution for tenors in the Verdi repertoire: one goes from his most youthful and light roles and matures into more heroic ones. I strived to stay true to this credence by slowly adding the roles of Gabriele Adorno

(*Simon Boccanegra*), Rodolfo (*Luisa Miller*), Carlo (*I masnadieri*), Riccardo (*Un ballo in maschera*), Don Carlos (in both the French and Italian versions) and Ernani, each of them requiring new levels of skill, musicality and dramatic intention.

With even more role debuts to come, I would say that Verdi, more than any other composer, has been my constant companion and teacher in my musical life. For that reason, it was most important to me to record this album containing some of the roles I have sung and some yet to come in the future. I wanted to include full scenes as I feel Verdi is best represented through the full context of his music and his dramatic sense of the stage.

I look forward to a future filled with music, especially with Maestro Verdi as a constant reminder of why I started this great journey.

Charles Castronovo



YIELDING TO INSPIRATION: INSIDE VERDI'S DRAMATIC INTUITION

"Verses and notes can be provided but unless they are at the right time and in the right place, they will never make any effect."

Responding to a demand to add an extra aria in *Rigoletto*, Verdi reveals his esthetic conception: in opera, music must be led by dramatic intent in order to appeal to the audience, thus forming what he calls the *"operatic theater"*.

Verdi's kinship with the dramatic genre is most evidently found in his choices of sources for his libretti. From Lord Byron's dramatic poems (*Il corsaro, I due Foscari*), to Schiller's historical narratives (*Don Carlos, Luisa Miller*), Verdi takes almost exclusively from playwrights renowned for both their poetry and plot abilities, with Shakespeare being his most revered and referenced model throughout his whole life (*Macbeth*). When Verdi's inspiration happens to turn to other authors closer to the opera genre, he deplores dramatic styles restraining theatricality: Scribe's *Gustave III* underwent many revisions before becoming *Un ballo in maschera*, not solely because of censorship, but also for the strict French grand opéra conventions it bore, which Verdi found *"insufferable"*.

Verdi considers the necessary reduction of great drama to opera form to be of particular complexity, leaving him to only dream of a *King Lear*. The desire to be true to the original material combined with his need of drama leads him to be particularly involved in his librettists' labor. Beyond his well-known severe letters criticizing the librettists' word choices and lack of dramatic sensitivity, Verdi is also keen to work first-hand on writing synopses, libretti in prose and, even, translations, as he did for *Macbeth* before entrusting it to Piave and Maffei, who was brought in when the former failed to meet the maestro's dramatic expectations.

Honoring the composer's deference for operatic theater, *Noble Renegades* offers mostly full scenes, thus staging the characters in dramatic context and displaying both character development and theatrical devices. In the case of *Luisa Miller*, Verdi requires Piave to "*stick as closely as possible to Schiller*". In need of an aria for Rodolfo, he insists on the importance of Luisa's letter—a key dramatic turning point—which unravels the tragedy and leads to Rodolfo's whole emotional turmoil ("Il foglio dunque?", "Quando le sere al placido", "Di me chiedeste", "L'ara, o l'avello apprestami").

Verdi's dedication to drama ultimately pours into his choice of singers: the emphasis is once more given to dramatic interpretation and scenic appearance over voice alone, as shown by several instances in his correspondence. The singer must sing, act and serve a character, hence demonstrating Verdi's desire for a genuine singer-actor: "*Voice alone, however beautiful [...] is not enough [...]. So-called voice finesse means little to me. I like to have roles sung the way I want them but I can't provide the voice, the 'temperament', the 'je ne sais quoi' that one might call the spark. It's what is usually understood by the phrase 'to be possessed by the devil.'*"

Noémie Tessier

* All quotations are from Verdi's correspondence as compiled in Charles Osborne's book, *Letters of Giuseppe Verdi*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972.





Don Carlos (1867), Act 1

1. Fontainebleau ! Forêt immense et solitaire

CARLOS

Fontainebleau ! Forêt immense et solitaire !
Quels jardins éclatants de fleurs et de lumière
pour l'heureux Don Carlos valent ce sol glacé
où son Élisabeth souriante a passé ?
Quittant l'Espagne et la cour de mon père,
de Philippe bravant la terrible colère,
caché parmi les gens de son ambassadeur,
j'ai pu la voir enfin, ma belle fiancée,
celle qui dès longtemps régnait dans ma pensée,
celle qui désormais régnera dans mon cœur !

CARLOS

Fontainebleau! Immense and lonely forest!
What gardens bursting with flowers and light
can for Don Carlos match this icy ground,
where his Elizabeth, smiling, appeared?
Quitting Spain and the court of my father,
braving Philip's terrible anger, hidden unnoticed
among his ambassador's retinue, I have
finally been able to behold her, my lovely fiancée,
the one who has long reigned over my thoughts,
the one who from now on shall rule in my heart!

2. Je l'ai vue

CARLOS

Je l'ai vue, et dans son sourire,
dans ses yeux pleins d'un feu charmant,
tout ému, mon cœur a pu lire
le bonheur de vivre en l'aimant.
Avenir rempli de tendresse,
bel azur dorant tous nos jours !
Dieu sourit à notre jeunesse,
Dieu bénit nos chastes amours !

CARLOS

I saw her, and in her smile,
in her eyes full of charming fire,
my heart, deeply moved, was able to read
the happiness of a lifetime loving her.
Future filled with tenderness,
beautiful golden azure sky all our days!
God smiles on our youth,
God blesses our chaste loves!

I due Foscari (1844), Act 1

3. Qui ti rimani

FANTE

Qui ti rimani alquanto,
finché il consiglio te di nuovo appelli.

JACOPO

Ah sì, ch'io senta ancora, ch'io respiri
aura non mista a gemiti e sospir.
(Il Fante entra in consiglio.)

Brezza del suol natìo,
il volto a baciarti voli all'innocente !
(appressandosi al verone)
Ecco la mia Venezia ! Ecco il suo mare !
Regina dell'onde, io ti saluto !
Sebben meco crudele,
io ti son pur de' figli il più fedele.

4. Dal più remoto esilio

JACOPO

Dal più remoto esilio,
sull'ali del desio,
a te sovente rapido
volava il pensier mio ;
come adorata vergine
te vagheggiando il core,

OFFICER

Here you must wait a while,
until the council calls for you again.

JACOPO

Ah yes, that I may feel and breathe again
air that is not mixed with groans and sighs.
(The Officer goes into the council chamber.)

Breeze of my native soil,
fly to kiss the face of the innocent!
(approaching the window)
There is my Venice! There is the sea!
Queen of the waves, I salute you!
Although cruel to me
I am the most faithful of your children.

JACOPO

From the most remote exile
carried on wings of desire,
to you often and rapidly
my thoughts flew.
As an adored virgin
the heart yearned for you,

l'esilio ed il dolore
quasi sparìan per me.

my exile and sorrow
almost disappeared.

5. Del consiglio alla presenza ... Odio solo, ed odio atroce

FANTE

Del consiglio alla presenza
vieni tosto, e il ver disvela.

JACOPO

(Al mio sguardo almen vi cela,
ciel pietoso, il genitor !)

FANTE

Sperar puoi pietà, clemenza ...

JACOPO

Chiudi il labbro, o mentitor !

Odio solo, ed odio atroce
in quell'anime si serra ;
sanguinosa, orrenda guerra
da costor si farà.
"Ma sei Foscari", una voce
sta tuonandomi nel core ;
"forza contro il lor rigor
l'innocenza ti darà".

OFFICER

Come quickly into the presence
of the council and reveal the truth.

JACOPO

(At least my father is hidden
from my gaze, merciful heaven!)

OFFICER

You can hope for mercy, for clemency ...

JACOPO

Close your lips, liar!

Only hatred, and atrocious hatred
exists within their souls:
they will undertake
a bloody, horrific war.
"But you are a Foscari", a voice
thunders in my heart;
"strength to withstand their severity
will be bestowed upon you by innocence".

Macbeth (1847), Act 4

6. O figli, o figli miei ... Ah, la paterna mano

MACDUFF

O figli, o figli miei!
Da quel tiranno tutti uccisi
voi foste, e insieme con voi
la madre sventurata!
Ah, fra gli artigli
di quel tigre io lasciai la madre e i figli?

Ah, la paterna mano
non vi fu scudo, o cari,
dai perfidi sicari
che a morte vi ferì!
E me fuggiasco, occulto,
voi chiamavate invano,
coll'ultimo singulto,
coll'ultimo respir.
Trammi al tiranno in faccia,
Signore! e s'ei mi sfugge,
possa a colui le braccia
del tuo pardon aprir.

MACDUFF

Oh children, oh my children!
By that tyrant you were all murdered,
and together with your
unfortunate mother!
Ah, in the claws
of that tiger did I leave that mother and her children?

Ah, your father's hand
was not there to shield you, my loved ones,
from the perfidious assassins
who put you to death!
And to me, a fugitive, hiding,
you called out in vain,
with your last gasp,
with your last breath.
Bring me face to face with the tyrant,
O Lord, and if he escapes me,
let your arms open
to him with thy mercy.

Un ballo in maschera (1859), Act 3

7. Forse la soglia attinse ... Ma se m'è forza perderti

RICCARDO

Forse la soglia attinse,
e posa alfin. L'onore
ed il dover nei nostri petti han rotto
l'abisso. Ah sì, Renato
rivedrà l'Inghilterra ... e la sua sposa
lo seguirà. Senza un addio, l'immenso
oceàn ne separì ... e taccia il core.
*(Scrive e nel momento di apporre
la firma lascia cader la penna.)*
Esito ancor ? ma, oh ciel, non lo deggio ?
(Sottoscrive e chiude il foglio in seno.)
Ah, l'ho segnato, il sacrificio mio !

Ma se m'è forza perderti
per sempre, o luce mia,
a te verrà il mio palpito
sotto qual ciel tu sia.
Chiusa la tua memoria
nell'intimo del cor.
(cupo) Ed or qual reo presagio
lo spirito m'assale,
che il rivederti annunzia
quasi un desio fatale ...
come se fosse l'ultima
ora del nostro amor ?

RICCARDO

Perhaps she reached home
and is resting at last. Honor
and duty have struck an abyss
between our breasts. Ah yes, Renato
will return to England ... and his wife
will follow him. Without farewells, let the vast
ocean separate us ... and my heart will be silent.
*(He writes, but in the moment that he is
about to sign, he lays down the pen.)*
Do I still hesitate? But, O heaven, is it not my duty?
(He signs the document and folds it to his breast.)
Ah, I have signed it, my sacrifice!

But if I am forced to lose you
for ever, O light of my life,
my beating heart will reach you
under whatever sky you are.
The memory of you shall be locked
deep within my heart.
(darkly) And now what is this evil foreboding
that assails my spirits,
announcing that seeing you again
is an almost fatal desire ...
as if it were the last
hour of our love?

I Lombardi (1843), Act 2

8. O madre mia, che fa colei

ORONTE

O madre mia, che fa colei ?

SOFIA

Sospira, piange, i suoi cari chiama ...
pur l'infelice t'ama.

ORONTE

Mortal di me più lieto
non ha la terra !

SOFIA

(Oh voglia Iddio
schiara' così la mente al figlio mio !)

9. La mia letizia infondere

ORONTE

La mia letizia infondere
vorrei nel suo bel core !
Vorrei destar co' palpiti
del mio beato amore
tante armonie nell'etere
quanti pianeti egli ha :
ah ! ir seco al cielo, ed ergermi
dove mortal non va !

ORONTE

O my mother, what is she [Giselda] doing?

SOFIA

She sighs, weeps, and calls to her dear ones ...
even though the unhappy girl loves you.

ORONTE

No mortal has more happiness
in all the world than me!

SOFIA

(Oh I wish for God
to this enlighten my son's mind!)

ORONTE

I wish to instil my joy
into her beautiful heart!
I wish that the throbbing
of blessed love that inspires me
could awaken as many harmonies in the universe
as it has planets:
ah! to go with her to heaven, and to soar aloft
where no mortal can go!

10. Oh ! ma pensa, che non puoi

SOFIA

Oh ! ma pensa, che non puoi
farla tua, se non ti prostri
prima al Dio de' padri suoi.

ORONTE

Sien miei sensi i sensi vostri !

SOFIA

Oh mia gioia !

ORONTE

O madre mia !
Già pensai più volte in cor
che sol vero il Nume sia
di quell'angelo d'amor.

11. Come poteva un angelo

ORONTE

Come poteva un angelo
crear sì puro il cielo,
e agli occhi suoi non schiudere
di veritade il velo ?
Vieni, m'adduci a lei,
rischiari i sensi miei ;
vieni, e nel ver s'acquetton
la dubbia mente e il cor !

SOFIA

Oh, but think, you cannot
make her yours if you do not prostrate
first to the [Christian] God of her fathers.

ORONTE

Let my beliefs be their beliefs!

SOFIA

Oh my joy!

ORONTE

Oh my mother!
Already I thought many times in my heart
that only the true God can be
worshipped by my beloved angel.

ORONTE

How could heaven
create such a pure angel,
and not open her eyes
by lifting the veil of truth?
Come, lead me to her,
illuminate my senses;
come, and may my doubting mind
and heart find comfort in the truth!

SOFIA

Figlio, t'infuse un angelo
per tua salute amor !

Luisa Miller (1849), Act 2

12. Il foglio dunque ?

RODOLFO

Il foglio dunque ?

CONTADINO

Io tutto già vi narrai !

RODOLFO

Mi giova udirlo ancor.

CONTADINO

Segreta e viva prece a man giunte
mi fe' Luisa, onde recarlo a Wurm ...

RODOLFO

E d'evitar la mia presenza ...

CONTADINO

Mi repeté più volte.
Sospetto incerto di non so qual trama,
e speme di mercede a voi m'han tratto.

RODOLFO

(gettandogli una borsa)
Esci.

SOFIA

My son, an angel has infused you
with love for your salvation!

RODOLFO

The letter then?

VILLAGER

I already told you everything!

RODOLFO

It helps me to hear it again.

VILLAGER

Secretly and imploring with clasped hands
Luisa made me agree to take it to Wurm ...

RODOLFO

And to avoid my presence ...

VILLAGER

She repeated it to me many times.
A vague suspicion of I don't know what sort of plot,
and the hope of a reward, took me to you.

RODOLFO

(throwing him a purse of money)
Go.

(Il contadino esce.)

Olà ?

(Comparisce un servo.)

Wurm.

(Il servo parte.)

Oh ! fede negar potessi agli occhi miei !

Se cielo e terra, se mortali ed angeli

Attestarmi volesser ch'ella non è rea,

"mentite !" io risponder dovrei, "tutti mentite !"

(mostrando il foglio)

Son cifre sue !

Tanta perfidia ! Un'alma

si nera ! si mendace !

Ben la conobbe il padre !

Ma dunque i giuri,

le speranze, la gioia,

le lagrime, l'affanno ?

Tutto è menzogna, tradimento, inganno !

(The villager leaves.)

Hello there?

(A servant appears.)

Send me Wurm.

(The servant leaves.)

Oh! faith, if only I could deny it to my own eyes!

If heaven and earth, if mortals and angels were

to attest to me that they want her not to be guilty,

"you lie!" I would have to respond, "you all lie!"

(brandishing the letter)

This is her handwriting!

Such perfidy! A soul

so black! So mendacious!

My father recognized the truth!

But therefore the vows,

the hopes, the joy,

the tears, the anguish?

All of it is a lie, betrayal, illusion!

13. Quando le sere al placido

RODOLFO

Quando le sere al placido

chiaror d'un ciel stellato

meco figgea nell'etere

lo sguardo innamorato,

e questa mano stringermi

dalla sua man sentia ...

Ah ! ... mi tradia !

RODOLFO

When, at nightfall, there was a tranquil

glow of the starlit heavens,

she would gaze into the sky

with me lovingly,

and I felt my hand

pressed by hers ...

Ah! ... She was betraying me!

Allor, ch'io muto, estatico
da' labbri suoi pendea,
ed ella in suon angelico,
"amo te sol" dicea,
tal che sembrò l'empireo
apirisi all'alma mia !
Ah ! ... mi tradia !

14. Di me chiedeste

WURM

Di me chiedeste ?

RODOLFO

Appressati.

(Gli porge il foglio)

Leggi.

(Wurm lo legge.)

Ad entrambi è questa ora di morte.

WURM

Oh !

RODOLFO

(presentandogli due pistole)

Scegliere tu dèi.

WURM

(cercando di allontanarsi)

Signor ...

Then I, mute, ecstatic,
hanging on every word from her lips.
and she, in angelic tones,
would say "I love only you",
it seemed like an empire
opened up to my soul!
Ah! ... She was betraying me!

WURM

You asked for me?

RODOLFO

Come here.

(He hands him the letter)

Read it.

(Wurm reads.)

For both of us this is the hour of death.

WURM

Oh!

RODOLFO

(presenting two pistols)

You must choose.

WURM

(wanting to retreat)

My lord ...

RODOLFO

T'arresta ...

Meco ad un punto solo
spento cader al suolo tè forza ...

WURM

(Inferno aiutami !)

(Scarica la pistola in aria.

*Accorrono d'ogni parte armigeri e famigliari,
seguiti da Walter.*

Wurm confondendosi tra i sopravvenuti, sparisce.)

SERVI

Che avvenne ? O ciel !

RODOLFO

Codardo ! L'ali ha viltade !

SERVI

Orribile d'ira vi splende il guardo !

WALTER

Rodolfo !

RODOLFO

Padre !

WALTER

O Dio ! Calmati !

RODOLFO *(cadendo ai piedi del padre)*

Ah ! Padre mio !

RODOLFO

Stop ...

You must fall dead with me
at this very moment ...

WURM

(Hell, come to my aid!)

(He fires the pistol into the air.

*Soldiers and people come rushing in
from all sides, followed by Walter.*

Wurm disappears among the crowd.)

SERVANTS

What happened? Oh heaven!

RODOLFO

The coward! Cravenness has wings!

SERVANTS

A horrible glint of anger flashes in his eyes!

WALTER

Rodolfo!

RODOLFO

Father!

WALTER

Oh, God! Calm down!

RODOLFO *(falling at his father's feet)*

Ah! Father!

WALTER

Deh ! sorgi ! M'odi.
Abbomino il mio rigor crudele.
Abbia virtude un premio.
Cedo ; alla tua fedele porgi la man.

RODOLFO

Che ascolto ! Tu vuoi ... ?

WALTER

Gioisci !

RODOLFO

Ah ! Stolto diverrò !

WALTER

Qual smanie !
Figlio ! Né pago sei ?

RODOLFO

Pago ?

WALTER

Sperai ...

RODOLFO

Compiangimi !
Tradito m'ha colei !

WALTER

Tradito !

WALTER

Ah! Arise! Listen to me.
My cruel rigor was abominable.
Let virtue be rewarded. I yield;
give your hand to your beloved.

RODOLFO

What do I hear! You wish me to ...?

WALTER

Be happy!

RODOLFO

Ah! I shall go insane!

WALTER

What wild words!
Son! Aren't you pleased?

RODOLFO

Pleased?

WALTER

I had hoped ...

RODOLFO

Pity me!
She has betrayed me!

WALTER

Betrayed you!

RODOLFO

A me t'afferetta, o morte !

WALTER

No ... vendetta !

RODOLFO

Come ?

WALTER

Altre nozze attestino
il tuo disprezzo ad essa !

RODOLFO

Che intendi ?

WALTER

All'ara pronuba conduci la Duchessa.

RODOLFO

Io ? Sì, lo vo', lo deggio ...
Che parlo ? Ahimé, vaneggio !

WALTER

Rodolfo, non pentirti.

RODOLFO

Ove mi sia non so !

WALTER

T'arrendi a me,
tradirti il padre tuo, no, non può.

RODOLFO

Hurry to me, oh death!

WALTER

No ... avenge yourself!

RODOLFO

How?

WALTER

Marry another to show
her your disdain!

RODOLFO

What do you mean?

WALTER

Lead the Duchess to the altar.

RODOLFO

!? Yes, I will, I must ...
What am I saying? Alas, I'm raving!

WALTER

Rodolfo, do not waver.

RODOLFO

I know not where I am!

WALTER

Trust me,
your father cannot betray you.

15. L'ara, o l'avello apprestami

RODOLFO

L'ara, o l'avello apprestami.

Al fato io m'abbandono.

Non temo ... Non desidero ...

Un disperato io sono ! ...

Or la mia brama volgere

nemmeno al ciel potrei,

ché inferno senza di lei

sarebbe il ciel per me !

SERVI

Del genitor propizio

al senno v'affidate ...

Nell'avvenir sperate :

eterno il duol non è.

WALTER

T'arrendi a me,

tradirti il padre tuo, no, non può.

Jérusalem (1847), Act 3

16. L'infamie ! Prenez ma vie !

GASTON

L'infamie ! Prenez ma vie !

Vos bourreaux je les défie !

Mais mon honneur ... ô douleur !

RODOLFO

Prepare for me the altar or the grave.

I abandon myself to fate.

I am not afraid ... I have no wishes ...

I am desperate! ...

I no longer even desire

that I could reach heaven,

for what hell, without her,

heaven would be for me!

SERVANTS

Trust the wisdom

of your propitious father ...

place hope in the future:

your sorrow is not eternal.

WALTER

Trust me,

your father cannot betray you.

GASTON

Infamy! Take my life!

Your executioners, I defy them!

But my honor ... oh misery!

Oh my friends, my brothers in arms,
see my sobs, see my tears!
The dishonor is too awful!
Do not overwhelm a wretched man.
My last day should be gentle to me,
and I implore it at your knees.
But, by heaven, me, an infamous traitor!
I weep, alas! I weep like a woman.
Ah! It is pity that I claim,
you will feel it in my words.
Oh, my friends, without it withering my name,
ah! leave me to die.

Il corsaro (1848), Act 1

17. Ah, si, ben dite

CORRADO

Ah, si, ben dite ... guerra ...
perenne, atroce, inesorabil guerra
contro gli uomini tutti ;
io per essi fui reo ... tutti gli abborro !
Temuto da costoro ed esecrato
infelice son io, ma vendicato !

Tutto pareo sorridere
all'amor mio primiero :
l'aura, la luce, l'etere

Ô mes amis, mes frères d'armes,
voyez mes pleurs, voyez mes larmes !
Le déshonneur c'est trop affreux !
N'accablez pas un malheureux.
Mon dernier jour me sera doux,
et je l'implore à vos genoux.
Mais, par le ciel, moi, traître infâme !
Je pleure, hélas ! Je pleure comme une femme.
Ah ! c'est la pitié que je réclame,
par quels accents vous attendrir.
Ô, mes amis, sans me flétrir,
ah ! laissez-moi mourir.

CORRADO

Ah yes, well said ... war ...
war, perennial, atrocious, inexorable war
against all men;
in their eyes I was a guilty outlaw ... I abhor them all!
Feared by them and execrated
unhappy am I, but avenged!

Everything seemed to smile at me
upon my first youthful love:
the breeze, the light, the ether

e l'universo intero ;
ma un fato inesorabile
ogni mio ben rapi,
più non vedrò risorgere
dell'innocenza il dì.

18. Pronti siate a seguirarmi

CORRADO

Pronti siate a seguirarmi ...
Gianni, a me tu appresti l'anni ...
risalpiam !...
Trascorsa un'ora,
tuoni il bronzo ...
in questa sera io comando alla bandiera.

CORO

Dici il vero ? Tu stesso ? ...

CORRADO

Sì ...

19. Sì, de' corsari il fulmine

CORRADO

Sì, de' corsari il fulmine
vibrar disegno io stesso ;
dal braccio nostro oppresso
il Musulman cadrà.

and the entire universe;
but an inexorable fate
robbed me of everything good,
no more shall I see
a day of innocence dawn.

CORRADO

Make ready to follow me ...
Gianni, for years at my side ...
let's set sail again! ...
In an hour from now,
fire the cannon ...
this evening I shall command under our flag.

CHORUS

Is this true? You yourself?

CORRADO

Yes ...

CORRADO

Yes, of the Corsairs, I myself will
strike the lightning blow;
from our oppressed arms
the Muslim will fall.

CORRADO & CORO

All'armi, e intrepidi
cadiam, cadiam sull'empia Luna ;
qual possa in noi s'aduna
il perfido apprenderà !

CORRADO & CHORUS

To arms, and intrepid
let's swoop on that impious crescent moon;
the perfidious will be taught a lesson
by whatever strength we can muster!

English translations: David Vickers, 2024





CHARLES CASTRONOVO, Tenor

Born in New York, Charles Castronovo made his debut at the Metropolitan Opera of New York in the role of Beppe (*Pagliacci*). He soon found himself cast in other roles, including Fenton (*Falstaff*), Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*), Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*), Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*), Alfredo Germont (*La Traviata*), the title role in *Faust*, Rodolfo (*La Bohème*), Nadir (*Les Pêcheurs de perles*), Belmonte (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), the Duke of Mantua (*Rigoletto*), Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*), Elvino (*La sonnambula*), Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*). In 2010, in Los Angeles, he portrayed the title role in Daniel Catán's opera *Il Postino* for its creation, alongside Plácido Domingo.

In recent years he has performed the roles of Roméo (*Roméo et Juliette*) in New York, Don José (*Carmen*) in Berlin and Chicaco, Faust (*La Damnation de Faust*) in Salzburg, Nemorino in Chicago, Rodolfo in New York, Berlin and Munich, Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*) in Munich, Vienna and Madrid, Alfredo Germont in New York, Don Ottavio in London, Des Grieux (*Manon*) in Vienna, and Jason (*Médée*) in Berlin. He performed the role of Riccardo / Gustavo (*Un ballo in maschera*) in Munich and New York, the title roles of both *Don Carlo* in Italian in Munich and *Don Carlos* in French in Geneva, and the role of Gabriele Adorno (*Simon Boccanegra*) at the Salzburg Festival, Opéra de Paris and for his debut at la Scala in 2024. He recently had his role debut of Cavaradossi (*Tosca*) in Munich and released a recording of a world premiere orchestration of Puccini songs, *I Canti*, with the Bayerische Rundfunk Orchestra on BR Klassik label.

Future projects include the release a full recording of *Ernani* on BR Klassik, a role debut as Max in *Der Freischütz* with the Kammerakademie Potsdam, the title role of *Don Carlos* in French at Opéra de Paris and a full recording of Verdi's *Requiem* with the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia.



CONSTANTINE ORBELIAN, Conductor

Four-time Grammy nominated conductor Constantine Orbelian has been called “the singer’s dream collaborator” by *Opera News*, which hailed him for conducting vocal repertoire “with the sensitivity of a lieder pianist.” In 2021, Orbelian was appointed Music Director and Principal Conductor of the New York City Opera. He has been the Principal Conductor and Music Director of the Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra (Lithuania) since 2013.

Orbelian has toured and recorded with some of the world’s greatest singers, such as American stars Renée Fleming, Sondra Radvanovsky, Lawrence Brownlee, and Stephen Costello, and with the great Dmitri Hvorostovsky and other renowned Russian singers in European, North American, Russian and Asian music centers.

Born in San Francisco to Russian and Armenian emigré parents, Orbelian made his performing debut as a piano prodigy with the San Francisco Symphony at the age of 11. After graduating from The Juilliard in New York, he embarked on a career as a piano virtuoso that included appearances with major symphony orchestras throughout the U.S., U.K., Europe and Russia. Recent collaborations have been with Daniil Trifonov in Mexico City, Isabel Leonard at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, Elīna Garanča at the Teatro Bellas Artes, and Kristina Reiko Cooper performing the European and American premiere (at Carnegie Hall) of Lera Auerbach’s Symphony No. 6 “Vessels of Light” dedicated to Chiune Sugihara, a Japanese diplomat who saved 6000 Jewish lives in Kaunas, Lithuania, in 1940. Orbelian’s Grammy nominated albums with Lawrence Brownlee (Rossini arias), Dmitri Hvorostovsky (Verdi’s *Rigoletto* and Georgy Sviridov’s *Cast off Russia*), and Stephen Costello (*A te, o cara*) were received with critical acclaim.

Orbelian was awarded the Medal of Friendship by the President of Armenia, Serzh Sarkissian, in 2015.

KAUNAS CITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Grammy nominated Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1988. It plays an integral part in the cultural life of Lithuania and the entire Baltic region. Outside its home country, the orchestra has performed in Estonia, Norway, Italy, Croatia, Germany, Finland, and Switzerland, among others.

The orchestra has played with renowned conductors, singers and soloists, including Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, Giedrė Šlekytė, Adrija Čepaitė, Juozas Domarkas, David Giménez,



Rune Bergmann, Dmitri Hvorostovsky, Lawrence Brownlee, Stephen Costello, John Osborn, José Carreras, Asmik Grigorian, Elīna Garanča, Alexander Markov, Domenico Nordio, Philippe Graffin, Laurens Weinhold, Alexander Kniazev, David Geringas, Aydar Gaynullin, and Romain Leleu.

Alongside classical repertoire, the orchestra performs pop, rock and jazz music. It has had the privilege to play with famed artists such as Scorpions, Electric Light Orchestra, Smokie, Sarah Brightman, Bonnie Tyler, Gregory Porter, Chris Norman, Robert Wells, and Maggie Reilly.





KRISTIN SAMPSON, Soprano

Praised by *The New York Times* for her "bright, sizable and expressive voice", Mexican-born American soprano Kristin Sampson has performed domestically with the New York City Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Opera Orchestra of New York, and Opera Carolina among many others. She has performed internationally at the Puccini Festival of Torre del Lago, Teatro del Giglio di Lucca, Teatro di Pisa, Magyar Tavak Fesztiválja in Hungary, Opera Society of Hong Kong, Armel Opera Festival, and Teatro Municipal de Santiago. Signature and favorite roles include Minnie in *La fanciulla del West*, the title roles in *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, and *Adriana Lecouvreur*, Mimì in *La Bohème*, Nedda in *Pagliacci*, Santuzza in *Cavalleria rusticana*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, and Liù in *Turandot*.



TOMAS PAVILIONIS, Tenor

Tomas Pavilionis studied at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre under Vytautas Juozapaitis. In 2009 and 2010 he was a laureate of the Stasys Baras singing competition, and in 2014 he was bestowed the Opera Hope of the Year award for his roles of Cornet, Count Almaviva and Alfredo. A member of the crossover music band El Fuego, Pavilionis has performed in Lithuania and abroad. In 2006 he toured the USA, and in 2008 he participated in the musical project "The Arc of Triumph" for the Lithuanian National Television. Since 2014 he has been a soloist with the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre.



TADAS GIRININKAS, Bass

Tadas Girininkas was born in Lithuania and studied at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. Past and future projects include Filippo and Inquisitore in *Don Carlo* at Latvian National Opera and Teatro di San Carlo, Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola* at Hedeland Festival, Dodon in *The Golden Cockerel* at Deutsche Nationaltheater Weimar, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* at Opera de Gran Canaria, and Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra* and Daland in *Der fliegende Holländer* at the Latvian National Opera. Girininkas has also recently debuted in the role of Méphistophélès in *Faust* at the Royal Danish Opera and as Wurm in *Luisa Miller* at the Aalto Theatre.



KAUNAS STATE CHOIR

The Kaunas State Choir was founded in 1969 by Petras Bingelis, a winner of the Lithuanian National Prize. The choir is noted for its long collaboration with violinist and conductor Yehudi Menuhin. The choir has also worked with other major figures including Justus Frantz, Mstislav Rostropovich, and Krzysztof Penderecki. It has performed in prestigious venues such as Salle Pleyel, Teatro Colón, and Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia; with more than 30 world famous orchestras. Grammy nominated recording of Verdi's *Rigoletto* with Dmitri Hvorostovsky alongside the Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra and Constantine Orbelian has been acclaimed by international critics. Since 2021 Kaunas State Choir's Artistic Director and Chief Conductor is Lithuanian National Culture and Art Prize Laureate, Professor Robertas Šervenikas.

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