

A TE, O CARA

STEPHEN COSTELLO
sings bel canto

CONSTANTINE ORBELIAN, CONDUCTOR
KAUNAS CITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

DE 3541



A TE, O CARA

STEPHEN COSTELLO SINGS BEL CANTO

DONIZETTI: *La fille du Régiment* — Ah mes amis; Pour me rapprocher de Marie ♦ *Don Sebastiano* — Deserto in terra ♦ *L'elisir d'amore* — Quanto e bella; Una furtiva lagrima ♦ *Don Pasquale* — Sogno soave e casto
♦ *La favorita* — Spirto gentil ♦ *Anna Bolena* — Vivi tu, te ne scongiuro
♦ *Lucia di Lammermoor* — Fra poco a me ricovero

BELLINI: *I puritani* — A te, o cara

VERDI: *Rigoletto* — Parmi veder le lagrime

STEPHEN COSTELLO, tenor

Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra

CONSTANTINE ORBELIAN, Conductor

Total Playing Time: 49:57

A TE, O CARA

STEPHEN COSTELLO SINGS BEL CANTO

GAETANO DONIZETTI:

1. *La fille du régiment*—“Ah mes amis” (4:08)
2. *La fille du régiment*—“Pour me rapprocher de Marie” (3:31)

VICENZO BELLINI:

3. *I puritani*—“A te, o cara” (3:19)

DONIZETTI:

4. *Don Sebastiano*—“Deserto in terra” (5:32)
5. *L'elisir d'amore*—“Quanto e bella” (2:40)
6. *L'elisir d'amore*—“Una furtiva lagrima” (5:00)
7. *Don Pasquale*—“Sogno soave e casto” (2:21)
8. *La favorita*—“Spirto gentil” (4:59)
9. *Anna Bolena*—“Vivi tu, te ne scongiuro” (5:21)

GIUSEPPE VERDI:

10. *Rigoletto*—“Parmi veder le lagrime” (5:36)

DONIZETTI:

11. *Lucia di Lammermoor*—“Fra poco a me ricovero” (7:29)

STEPHEN COSTELLO, tenor

**Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra
CONSTANTINE ORBELIAN, conductor**

Total Playing Time: 49:57

"The love of a friend can have a powerful impact on one's life. This album is for you, Dima. Without you, none of this would have been possible. You are still as present in the world today as when you walked among us."

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

1. Gaetano Donizetti wrote the comic opera ***La fille du régiment***, one of his best-loved works, while he was living in Paris, where the opera was premiered in 1840. The work's hero, the Tyrolean commoner Tonio, is in love with Marie, an orphaned girl who had been adopted by the French 21st Regiment—and he will stop at nothing to gain Marie's hand in marriage. Tonio's signature aria "**Ah! Mes amis**" is heard in Act I, after he has decided to enlist in the regiment, knowing that he can only marry Marie if he is a member of the unit. Studded with a total of nine high Cs, this is one of the most spectacularly demanding tenor arias in the operatic canon.
2. In Act II of the same opera, the noblewoman Marquise of Berkenfield takes Marie—who turns out to be her long-lost niece—into her castle, where she has resolved to transform Marie into a proper lady, fit to marry her aristocratic nephew. However, Marie still loves Tonio; and when the Marquise catches Marie and Tonio together, Tonio reveals the depths of his love for Marie in the romance "**Pour me rapprocher de Marie.**"
3. ***I puritani***, by Vincenzo Bellini—premiered in Paris in January of 1835—is regarded by many (despite its awkward libretto) as one of the most beautiful of Bellini's ten operas—second only to *Norma*, his masterpiece. It was his final work in the genre; he died tragically young at age 33 only nine months later. The plot centers around the seemingly star-crossed love between Cavalier Arturo of the Royalists and lady Elvira of the Puritans: the opposing factions of the 1649 English Civil War. In scene 3 of Act I, Arturo joins his bride-to-be Elvira in the Puritan castle hall bearing gifts, and—in the impassioned aria "**A te, o cara**"—sings of the love he has always had for her.
4. Donizetti's ***Don Sebastiano, re di Portogallo*** (which is better known in its French version) was his final opera, completing it before he sank into insanity and suffered his final illness. First staged in 1843, this tragic (and lengthy) tale has been called "a funeral in five acts." In the story, the Christian Portuguese king Don Sebastiano has embarked upon a crusade against the Moors in Morocco, where his army is soon annihilated by Moorish forces. As Act II draws to a close, Sebastiano is left on the battlefield, badly wounded and in utter desolation. He gives

voice to his shame and misery in “**Deserto in terra,**” finding his only consolation in knowing that he still has “the love of a woman and the heart of a soldier.”

5. Written in only six weeks, the comic opera (*melodrama giocoso*) ***L’elisir d’amore*** has remained one of Donizetti’s most popular operas ever since its 1832 premiere in Milan. It tells of the young peasant Nemorino and his love for Adina, a beautiful and wealthy landowner. Early in Act I, Nemorino sings of his love for her in his aria “**Quanto è bella,**” wondering who can help him win her heart. After overhearing Adina reading to her workers about the magic love potion of the ancient Tristan and Isolde legend, he concludes that such a potion is the only way to win Adina’s love. The charlatan Dulcamara then appears and sells Nemorino a flask of cheap wine, claiming that this “potion” will do the trick—but it only gets him drunk!

6. In Act II of the same opera, Nemorino observes Adina in tears after he has surreptitiously given her the alleged magic potion. Believing that he has finally won Adina’s heart, Nemorino voices his increasing passion in the melting and beautifully crafted aria “**Una furtiva lagrima**”—a staple of any bel canto tenor’s repertoire. Seeing the happy pair in each other’s arms, Dulcamara then claims cred-

it and does a brief but booming business selling his “potion” before fleeing town.

7. Considered one of the supreme examples of *opera buffa*, Donizetti’s often hilarious ***Don Pasquale*** was premiered in 1843. The opera’s hero Ernesto, the nephew (and heir apparent) of the elderly bachelor Don Pasquale, is in love with Norina. But fairly early in Act I, the old man shocks and surprises Ernesto, telling him of his sudden decision to disinherit Ernesto and marry his own “beloved” (who later turns out to be Norina), enabling him to produce a true heir. In his desolate, but lovely aria “**Sogno soave e casto,**” Ernesto—facing certain destitution—laments the demise of his fondest dream: to lavish wealth and luxury upon Norina; and he resolves to renounce their relationship, sparing her the misery of his apparent poverty-stricken future.

8. Set in Spain in the era of the Moorish invasions, Donizetti’s ***La favorita***—in its French version—had its 1840 premiere in Paris. In the opera, the former monk Fernando, not knowing that his beloved Leonora has been the “favorite” (or mistress) of King Alphonse, asks the king for her hand in marriage, which is granted as his reward for leading the Castilian forces to victory in battle over the Moors. Thinking that his bride-to-be is pure, Fernando prepares to marry her. But before she appears, he finds out that she

has been the king's lover. Broken-hearted, he returns to his onetime monastery and—in "**Spirto gentil**"—bitterly mourns the betrayal of his love and the loss of Leonora, praying for forgetfulness.

9. **Anna Bolena**—one of Donizetti's vaunted "three queens" series—recounts the events leading up to the brutal fate of Anna (Anne Boleyn), the second wife of England's King Henry VIII (Enrico). She has been condemned to death on false charges to clear the king's path to wed Giovanna (Jane Seymour), his third marriage. Lord Percy (Anna was his first love) and Lord Rochefort (Anna's brother)—having also been sentenced to death on trumped-up charges—languish together in their Tower-of-London cell, awaiting their executions. The king's courtier Hervey enters to tell them that the king has pardoned them both. But after learning from Hervey that Anna is to be executed, they choose to share her fate. Percy, in his aria "**Vivi tu, te ne scongiuro,**" begs Rochefort in vain to accept the king's pardon and seek "a land less sad," where he can lament Percy's and Anna's fates and pray for them.

10. **Rigoletto**, Giuseppe Verdi's grim operatic tale of the womanizing Duke of Mantua's hunchbacked court jester, Rigoletto, and his ill-fated daughter Gilda, received its wildly successful premiere at Venice's La Fenice theater in 1850. In Act II, the

Duke discovers that Gilda—having been previously seduced by the disguised duke and then abducted by courtiers angered by Rigoletto's vicious insults—is missing. The duke, in an initially apparent reversal of his immoral character, laments the disappearance of his so-called "beloved" in "**Parmi veder le lagrime**"—even intimating that she has made a "virtuous man" of him—and swears to take revenge on those who have taken her away from him.

11. Donizetti's **Lucia de Lammermoor** premiered in Naples in 1835. The opera tells the tale of Lucia, sister to the Lord of Lammermoor, and her star-crossed love for Edgardo, the last surviving member of the Ravenwoods: a family with which Lucia's own has been embroiled in a generations-long dispute. In the third and final act of the opera, Edgardo sings the aria "**Fra poco a me ricovero,**" expressing his utter despair at the thought of his imminent self-inflicted doom amid the tombs of his ancestors, calling them "an ill-fated lineage." And believing that Lucia (who has gone mad and died) is still alive and newly married to his rival, Edgardo implores her *in absentia* not to visit his tomb with her new husband. He then learns of Lucia's demise, but his grief is tempered by his resolve to join her in heaven. After Lucia's bier passes, Edgardo stabs himself and dies.

— Lindsay Koob

**1. Donizetti: *La fille du régiment* –
“Ah! Mes amis, quel jour de fête”**

Ah! mes amis, quel jour de fête!
Je vais marcher sous vos drapeaux.
L'amour, qui m'a tourné la tête,
désormais me rend un héros.
Ah! quel bonheur, oui, mes amis,
je vais marcher sous vos drapeaux!
Qui, celle pour qui je respire,
a mes vœux a daigné sourire
et ce doux espoir de bonheur
trouble ma raison et mon cœur! Ah!

Pour mon âme,
quel destin!
J'ai sa flamme,
et j'ai sa main!
Jour prospère!
Me voici,
militaire et mari!

**2. Donizetti: *La fille du régiment* –
“Pour me rapprocher de Marie”**

Pour me rapprocher de Marie,
je m'enrôlai, pauvre soldat,
j'ai pour elle risqué ma vie,
et je disais dans les combats:
Si, jamais la grandeur enivre,
cet ange qui m'a su charmer, ah!
Il me faudrait cesser de vivre,
s'il me fallait cesser d'aimer!
Tout en tremblant, je viens, Madame,

Ah! my friends, what a day to celebrate!
I shall march beneath your banners.
Love, which has turned my head,
henceforth makes me a hero.
Ah! What happiness, yes, my friends,
I shall march beneath your banners!
Yes, she whom I sigh for,
has consented to smile upon my suit
and this sweet hope of happiness
disturbs my reason and my heart!

What a destiny
for my soul!
I have both her heart,
and her hand!
Lucky day!
Here I stand,
soldier and husband!

So that I could approach Marie
I enlisted as a poor soldier.
I have risked my life for her
and I would say as battle raged:
if ever grandeur could enchant
this angel who has stolen my heart, ah!
I would rather stop living
than to stop loving her!
Trembling I come, Madame,

réclamer mon unique bien!
Si j'ai su lire dans son âme,
mon bonheur est aussi le sien!
Lorsqu'à l'espoir mon coeur se livre;
sa voix saura vous désarmer.
Il me faudrait cesser de vivre,
s'il me fallait cesser d'aimer!

**3. Bellini: *I puritani*—
"A te, o cara"**

A te, o cara, amor talora,
mi guidò furtivo e in pianto;
or mi guida a te d'accanto,
tra la gioia e l'esultar.

Al brillar di sì bell'ora,
se rammento il mio tormento
si raddoppia il mio contento,
m'è più caro il palpitar.

**4. Donizetti: *Don Sebastiano, re di
Portogallo* — "Deserto in terra"**

Deserto in terra—che più mi avanza?
Fin la speranza—fuggì da me!
Tu sol mi resti—core amoroso,
angiol pietoso—che il ciel mi die! Ah!
Che non poss' io—per tanta fè,
il serto mio—deporti al piè?
Folle! di trono—che pur ragiono?
Ahi nulla il fato—a me lasciò! Ah!
Deserto in terra—che più m'avanza?
Fin la speranza—m'abbandonò!

to claim my dearest treasure!
If I can read in her soul,
both my happiness and her own!
When I give my heart up to love;
her voice will disarm you more.
I would rather stop living
Than to stop loving her!

To you, oh beloved,
love once led me furtively and in tears;
now, in joy and exultation,
it takes me to your side.

In the brilliance of such a happy hour,
recalling my sufferings
my happiness is redoubled,
and love's heartbeats are yet dearer.

Alone in the world—what more is left for me?
Even hope has flown from me!
You alone abide—loving heart,
angel of mercy, gift of heaven!
Why can't I, for so much love,
lay my crown at your feet?
Madness! Can I even think of a throne?
Ah! Fate has left me nothing!
Alone in the world—what more is left for me?
Even hope has flown from me!

Pur fra l' ire di sorte funesta
non del tutto son misero ancor,
se l'amore d'un angiol mi resta, Ah!
D' un soldato se restami il cor !

**5. Donizetti: *L'elisir d'amore*—
"Quanto è bella"**

Quanto è bella, quanto è cara!
Più la vedo, e più mi piace...
ma in quel cor non son capace
lieve affetto ad inspirar.
Essa legge, studia, impara...
non vi ha cosa ad essa ignota...
Io son sempre un idiota,
io non so che sospirar.
Chi la mente mi rischiara?
Chi m'insegna a farmi amar?

**6. Donizetti: *L'elisir d'amore*—
"Una furtiva lagrima"**

Una furtiva lagrima
negli occhi suoi spuntò:
Quelle festose giovani
invidiar sembrò.
Che più cercando io vo?
Che più cercando io vo?
M'ama! Sì, m'ama,
lo vedo. Lo vedo.
Un solo instante i palpiti
del suo bel cor sentir!
I miei sospir, confondere
per poco a' suoi sospir!

Yet in the thrall of cruel fate,
I am still not completely bereft,
if I still have the love of an angel
And am yet a soldier at heart!

How beautiful, how dear she is,
The more I see of her, the more I like her.
But in that heart I'm not capable
of inspiring such affection.
She reads, studies and learns...
I don't see her ignoring anything.
I'm always such an idiot;
all I know how to do is sigh.
Who will clear my mind?
Who will show me how to be loved?

A single furtive tear
fell from her eye:
as if she envied all the youths
that laughing, passed her by.
What more searching need I do?
What more searching need I do?
She loves me! Yes, she loves me—
I see it, I see it.
For just an instant I could feel
the beating of her beautiful heart!
As if my sighs were hers,
and her sighs were mine!

I palpiti, i palpiti sentir,
confondere i miei
coi suoi sospir...
Cielo! Si può morir!
Di più non chiedo, non chiedo.
Ah, cielo! Si può! Si, può morir!
Di più non chiedo, non chiedo.
Si può morire! Si può morir d'amor.

**7. Donizetti: *Don Pasquale*—
"Sogno soave e casto"**

Sogno soave e casto
de' miei prim'anni, addio.
Bramai ricchezze e fasto
solo per te, ben mio:
Povero, abbandonato,
caduto in basso stato,
pria che vederti misera,
cara, rinunzio a te.

**8. Donizetti: *La favorita*—
"Spirto gentil"**

Favorita del re! qual negro abisso,
qual mia trama infernal, la gloria mia
avvolse in un istante,
e ogni speme troncò del
core amante!

Spirto gentil,
ne' sogni miei brillasti un dì,
ma ti perdei:

I could feel the beating, the beating
of her heart;
to join my sighs with hers...
Heavens! Yes, I could die!
I could ask for nothing more, nothing more.
Oh, heavens! Yes, I could, I could die!
I could ask for nothing more, nothing more.
Yes, I could die! Yes, I could die of love.

Sweet and chaste dream
of my early years, farewell.
I longed for wealth and splendor,
Just for you, my love:
Poor, abandoned,
fallen to a low state,
before seeing you in such misery,
dear, I must renounce you.

The king's mistress! What black abyss,
what intrigue on my part, has shrouded
my glory in an instant,
and shattered my loving heart's
every hope!

Gentle spirit,
you once lit up my dreams,
but I've lost you:

Fuggi dal cor mentita speme,
larve d'amor fuggite insieme.

A te d'accanto
del genitore scordava il pianto,
la patria, il ciel donna sleal;
in tanto amore segnasti il cor
d'onta mortal, ahimè!

9. **Donizetti: *Anna Bolena*—
"Vivi tu, te ne scongiuro"**

Vivi tu, te ne scongiuro,
tu men tristo, e men dolente;
cerca un suolo in cui sicuro
abbia asilo un innocente;
cerca un lido in cui vietato
non ti sia per noi pregar.
Ah! qualcuno il nostro fato
resti in terra a lagrimar.
Nel veder la tua costanza
il mio cor si rasserena,
non temea che la tua pena
non soffria che il tuo soffrir.
L'ultim'ora che s'avanza
ambedue sfidar possiamo,
che nessun quaggiù lasciamo,
né timore, né desir.

10. **Verdi: *Rigoletto*—
"Parmi veder le lagrime"**

Ella mi fu rapita!
E quando, o ciel!...

Fly from my heart, false hope,
begone, all illusions of love.

At your side, unfaithful woman
I would forget my father's sorrow,
my country and heaven.
But loving me so, you marked
my heart with mortal shame— alas!

Live, I beg you,
seek a land less sorrowful,
less painful, in which an innocent man
might find safe asylum;
seek a shore where it might not be forbidden
for you to pray for us.
Ah! Let someone remain on earth
to bewail our fate.
The sight of your constancy
cheers my heart,
I feared only your sorrow,
only your suffering brought me pain.
Together we can both defy
the last hour that draws near.
We leave no one here on earth,
and go without fear or desire.

She has been taken away from me!
When? O heavens, just before

ne' brevi istanti, prima,
che un presagio interno
sull' orma corsa ancora mi spingesse!
Schiuso era l' uscio! la magion deserta!
E dove ora sarà quell' angiol caro?
Colei che potè prima in questo core
destar la fiamma di
costanti affetti?

Colei si pura, al cui modesto accento
quasi tratto a virtù talor mi credo!
Ella mi fu rapita!
E chi l' ardiva?... ma ne avrò vendetta...
lo chiede il pianto della mia diletta.

Parmi veder le lagrime
scorrenti da quel ciglio,
quando fa il duolo e l' ansia
del subito priglio,
dell' amor nostro memore
il suo Gualtier chiamò.
Ned ei potea soccorrerti,
cara fanciulla amata;
ei che vorría coll' anima
farti quaggiù beata;
ei che le sfere agli angeli
per te non invidiò.

**11. Donizetti: *Lucia di Lammermoor*—
“Fra poco a me ricovero”**

Tombe degli avi miei, l'ultimo avanzo
d'una stirpe infelice, deh! raccogliete voi.
Cessò dell'ira il breve foco

a dark omen sent me rushing
onto the trodden path!
The door was ajar! The house deserted!
Where is that dear angel now?
She was the only one who could
kindle in this heart the flame of
undying love!
Where will I find her?

She so pure that I can dare to believe
that her modest glance has made me virtuous!
I can even believe it has made me virtuous!
She was taken from me! Who dared it?
I will take revenge, her tears ask for it.

I can almost see her tears flow
from her eyes,
when torn between sorrow and anxiety
of the sudden danger
in recalling our love
she called out for her Gualtier.
Nor could he rescue you,
dear beloved, even as he
longed with his entire soul
to bring you earthly happiness;
he doesn't envy the angels in heaven
when you are near.

Ah, ancestral tombs, receive me,
the last of an ill-fated lineage.
My anger's flare is extinguished;

sul nemico acciaro abbandonar mi vo!
Per me la vita è orrendo peso!
l'universo intero è un deserto per me
senza Lucia!
Di faci tuttavia splende il castello, Ah!
Scarsa fu la notte al tripudio!
Ingrata donna!
mentr'io mi struggo in disperato pianto,
tu ridi, esulti accanto al felice consorte!
Tu della gioie in seno,
tu della gioie in seno, io della morte!

Fra poco a me ricovero
darà negletto avello,
una pietosa lagrima
non scenderà su quello!
Ah! fin degli estinti, ahi misero!
Manca il conforto a me.
Tu pur, tu pur dimentica
quel marmo dispregiato:
Mai non passarvi, o barbara
del tuo consorte a lato.
Ah! rispetta almen le ceneri
di chi moria per te,
rispetta almen le ceneri di chi moria per te!
Mai non passarvi, tulo dimentica,
rispetta almeno chi muore per te,
mai non passarvi, tulo dimentica,
rispetta almeno chi muore,
chi muore per te,
o barbara, io moro per te!

I now abandon myself to my
enemy's sword.
Life is a horrendous burden;
without Lucia, the universe is a desert,
though the torches still light the castle.
Ah, ungrateful woman,
how fleeting was the night of jubilation.
While I languish in tearful desperation,
you laugh merrily by your lucky hus-
band's side
even as your very joy kills me.

Give me now refuge,
neglected tomb.
Nobody's tears of pity
will fall on you!
Ah! Not even death
will bring me comfort
as you, oh cruel one,
forget this lowly grave.
Never pass by it
at your husband's side.
Respect, at least, the remains
of he who gave his life for you.
etc.
Oh, savage one, I die for you!

Stephen Costello
Tenor

"A prodigiously gifted singer whose voice makes an immediate impact" (*Associated Press*), Stephen Costello stands "among the world's best tenors" (*Daily Express*, UK). The Philadelphia-born artist came to national attention in 2007, when, aged 26, he made his Metropolitan Opera debut on the company's season-opening night. Two years later he won the prestigious Richard Tucker Award, and in 2010 he drew special praise for his creation of the role of Greenhorn (Ishmael) in Dallas Opera's celebrated world-premiere production of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer's *Moby Dick*. He has since appeared at many of the world's most important opera houses and music festivals, including London's Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; the Deutsche Oper Berlin; the Vienna State Opera; the Lyric Opera of Chicago; San Francisco Opera; Washington National Opera; and the Salzburg Festival.

Costello played the tenor lead in each of Donizetti's three Tudor operas at the Dallas Opera, before reprising Lord Percy opposite Anna Netrebko for his second opening-night performance at the Met, in the company's premiere presentation of *Anna Bolena*, which was transmitted worldwide in the Met's Live in HD series.

He gave his first performances with the Boston Symphony and Andris Nelsons alongside Renée Fleming in Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier* and made his Los Angeles Opera debut in *La bohème* as Rodolfo, now one of his most celebrated signature roles. For his first appearances at Washington National Opera, he resumed the role of Greenhorn in Heggie/Scheer's *Moby Dick*, and for his Houston Grand Opera debut, he scored glowing reviews as the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*. Verdi's Duke has since also been the vehicle for Costello's memorable appearances in the Met's Vegas setting of the opera, directed by Michael Mayer, and in a special televised, outdoor performance of *Rigoletto* in Hannover. Other career highlights saw him headline "BrAVA Philadelphia!"—the Academy of Vocal Arts' 80th Anniversary Gala Concert—at Philadelphia's Kimmel Center, and undertake the male lead in *La traviata*, both for the historic first live webcast of a complete opera from London's Royal Opera House, and in a San Francisco Opera production that was simulcast to thousands in AT&T Park, home of baseball's San Francisco Giants.

Costello's performance as Cassio in Verdi's *Otello*, under Riccardo Muti's leadership at the Salzburg Festival, was released on DVD in 2010 (Major/Naxos), and his Covent Garden debut in Donizetti's *Linda di*



Chamounix was issued on CD a year later (Opera Rara). His star turn in San Francisco Opera's *Moby Dick*, televised nationwide on PBS's Great Performances, was released on DVD in 2013 (SFO) and named an "Editor's Choice" by *Gramophone*. Similarly, his appearance alongside Renée Fleming, Joyce DiDonato, and other operatic luminaries in 2013's Richard Tucker Gala, which celebrated the legendary tenor's centennial, was broadcast on PBS's Live from Lincoln Center and subsequently issued on DVD. The same year saw the release of *here/after: songs of lost voices* (PentaTone), featuring the tenor's world premiere recording of Jake Heggie's *Friendly Persuasions: Homage to Poulenc*.

Besides winning the 2009 Richard Tucker Award, Stephen Costello has previously received other grants from the Richard Tucker Music Foundation, as well as taking First Prize in the 2006 George London Foundation Awards Competition, First Prize and Audience Prize in the Giargiari Bel Canto Competition, and First Prize in the Licia Albanese-Puccini Foundation Competition. A native of Philadelphia, he is a graduate of the city's famed Academy of Vocal Arts. He is also a proud supporter of the Jack Costello Boxing Gym, named for his uncle and dedicated to "improving the health, self-esteem and character of Philadelphia youth through structured

athletic training." He resides with his wife, Yoon Kwon, a violinist with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, in New York City.

www.stephencostellotenor.com

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Grammy-nominated conductor **Constantine Orbelian** "stands astride two great societies, and finds and promotes synergistic harmony from the best of each." (*Fanfare*) For over 25 years the brilliant American pianist/conductor has been a central figure in Russia's and Eastern Europe's musical life—first as Music Director of the Moscow Chamber Orchestra and the Philharmonia of Russia, and more recently as Chief Conductor of the Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra in Lithuania. In 2016 he also became Artistic Director of the State Academic Opera and Ballet Theater in Yerevan, Armenia. In all of these centers, Orbelian leads concerts and recordings with some of the world's greatest singers.

Opera News calls Constantine Orbelian "the singer's dream collaborator," and commented that he conducts vocal repertoire "with the sensitivity of a lieder pianist." The California-based conductor tours and records with American stars such as Sondra Radvanovsky and Lawrence Brownlee,



and made numerous celebrated recordings with Dmitri Hvorostovsky before the legendary singer's untimely death. Orbelian is the founder of the annual Palaces of St. Petersburg International Music Festival.

"Orbelian has star quality, and his orchestra plays with passion and precision," *The Audio Critic* wrote of his acclaimed series of over 50 recordings on Delos. Among his concert and televised appearances are collaborations with stars Renée Fleming and Dmitri Hvorostovsky, and with Van Cliburn in Cliburn's sentimental return to Moscow, the great pianist's last performance. Orbelian's frequent collaborations with Hvorostovsky included repertoire from their Delos recordings of universal sentimental songs *Where Are You, My Brothers?* and *Moscow Nights*, as well as their 2015 recording in the same series, *Wait for Me*. Orbelian has conducted historic live telecasts from Moscow's Red Square, with such artists as Hvorostovsky and Anna Netrebko.

Born in San Francisco to Russian and Armenian emigré parents, Constantine Orbelian made his debut as a piano prodigy with the San Francisco Symphony at the age of 11. After graduating from Juilliard in New York, he embarked on a career as a piano virtuoso that included appearances with major symphony orchestras throughout the United States, United Kingdom, Europe, and

Russia. His recording of the Khachaturian piano concerto with conductor Neeme Järvi won the "Best Concerto Recording of the Year" award in the United Kingdom.

Orbelian's appointment in 1991 as Music Director of the Moscow Chamber Orchestra was a breakthrough event: he is the first American ever to become music director of an ensemble in Russia. A tireless champion of Russian-American cultural exchange and international ambassadorship through his worldwide tours, he was awarded the coveted title "Honored Artist of Russia" in 2004, a title never before bestowed on a non-Russian citizen. In May 2010, Orbelian led the opening Ceremonial Concert for the Cultural Olympics in Sochi—he first event setting the stage for Russia's hosting of the Olympic Games in 2014. In 2012 the Consulate in San Francisco awarded him the Russian Order of Friendship Medal, whose illustrious ranks include pianist Van Cliburn and conductor Riccardo Muti, and which singles out non-Russians whose work contributes to the betterment of international relations with the Russian Federation and its people.

From his 1995 performance at the 50th Anniversary Celebrations of the United Nations in San Francisco, to his 2004 performance at the U.S. State Department commemorating 70 years of diplomatic

relations between Washington and Moscow, and a repeat State Department appearance in 2007, all with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra, Orbelian continues to use his artistic eminence in the cause of international goodwill. He and his orchestras have also participated in cultural

enrichment programs for young people, both in Russia and the United States. In 2001 Orbelian was awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, an award given to immigrants, or children of immigrants, who have made outstanding contributions to the United States.

Constantine Orbelian and the Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra



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(707) 996-3844 • (800) 364-0645

contactus@delosmusic.com • www.delosmusic.com

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