



Antonio Smareglia

Nozze Istriane

Knego · Surian · Polinelli · Puerta · Počkaj · Findrik
Rijeka Opera Chorus
Rijeka Symphony Orchestra
Simon Krečić



Antonio Smareglia

Antonio Smareglia 1854–1929

Nozze Istriane

Lyrical Drama in 3 Acts · Libretto: Luigi Illica

First performance: 28 March 1895, Teatro Comunale, Trieste

Marussa, Bara Menico's daughter

Anamarija Knego soprano

Bara Menico

Giorgio Surian bass

Biagio, a fiddler who plays villotta music

Filippo Polinelli bass

Lorenzo

Jorge Puerta tenor

Nicola

Jure Počkaj baritone

Luze, a Slav girl

Stefany Findrik alto

Rijeka Opera Chorus

Rijeka Symphony Orchestra

of the **Croatian National Theater Ivan pl. Zajc Rijeka**

Simon Krečič

CD 1

Act 1

1	Preludio	3'30
2	Scena I. Coro: <i>O! Biagio protettore</i>	4'12
3	Scena II. Biagio, Menico, Nicola, Coro: <i>Padron mio bello e caro!</i>	4'12
4	Scena III. Menico, Biagio: <i>Se perdo i vespri a starti ad ascoltare</i>	4'39
5	Scena IV. Coro, Nicola, Biagio, Menico: <i>A nozze v'ha invitati</i>	2'42
6	Scena V. Biagio, Menico, Luze: <i>Ah, acerbe e fracide!</i>	1'22
7	Scena VI. Marussa, Luze, Biagio: <i>Tu che sì buona appari</i>	6'51
8	Scena VII. Lorenzo: <i>Sebben io passi</i>	1'45
9	Scena VIII. Lorenzo, Marussa: <i>Ho tuo padre incontrato</i>	7'40
10	Scena IX. Coro, Lorenzo, Marussa: <i>La piange!</i>	0'56
11	Scena ultima. Menico, Lorenzo, Marussa: <i>Non l'ho trovato!</i>	2'14

Act 2

12	Scena I. Menico, Biagio: <i>E nulla! Ancora nulla?</i>	10'48
13	Scena II. Menico: <i>Diavolo d'uom'!</i>	2'35

Total time 53'34

CD 2

14	Scena III. Marussa, Menico: <i>Mio padre!</i>	1'13
15	Scena IV. Biagio, Menico, Marussa: <i>Si può? Si può?</i>	8'31
16	Scena V. Menico, Biagio, Marussa, Nicola: <i>Marussa piange?</i>	2'17
17	Scena VI. Menico, Biagio, Nicola: <i>Non c'è che dir</i>	1'34
18	Scena VII. Menico, Biagio, Marussa, Nicola, Lorenzo: <i>Marussa, buona sera</i>	7'33

Act 3

19	Preludio	2'51
20	Scena I, II. Marussa: <i>Chi batte?</i>	12'04
21	Scena III. Menico: <i>Marussa a che ti attardi, presto, fanciulla mia</i>	0'57
22	Scena IV. Luze: <i>Ecco, Lorenzo è qui</i>	6'49
23	Scena V. Nicola, Marussa, Lorenzo, Biagio, Menico: <i>Marussa, ancora non siete abbigliata?</i>	7'39

Total time 51'34

Antonio Smareglia Leben

Der Opernkomponist Antonio Smareglia wurde am 5. Mai 1854 in Pula geboren. Während der zwei ersten Schuljahre in Rijeka erhielt er Unterricht auf Kroatisch, in der dritten Klasse kam er nach Koper, wo der Unterricht in italienischer Sprache stattfand; danach besuchte er Schulen in Pazin und Gorizia, wo deutsch gesprochen wurde. Dieser Pluralismus der Kulturen, der nationalen Einflüsse und Identitätsmerkmale begleitete ihn seit seiner frühen Kindheit und findet seinen Widerhall in seinem Schaffen, das in gewisser Weise sowohl universell als auch individuell ist – in jedem Fall unbrauchbar für die nationalen Narrative, die ihn je nach der momentanen Stimmung oder dem historischen Kontext für sich beanspruchten oder ablehnten.

Während seiner Schulzeit in Wien und Graz lernte Antonio Smareglia die aktuellen Ereignisse der Kultur und der Musik kennen, und er beschloss, ausschließlich Musik zu studieren. Seine Eltern unterstützten dieses Vorhaben. Smareglia ging nach Mailand, um dort – zunächst privat und dann am Konservatorium – seine Ausbildung fortzusetzen. Arrigo Boito machte ihn mit der kulturellen Bewegung und dem Künstlerkreis der Scapigliatura bekannt, die eine neue musikalische Reform zur Wiederbelebung der italienischen Kunst und Kultur propagierten.

Zu seinen Lebzeiten wurden Smareglia Opern an renommierten Veranstaltungsorten wie der Mailänder Scala, der New Yorker Met, der Wiener Hofoper, dem Königlichen Theater in Dresden und vielen anderen bedeutenden Theatern und Opernhäusern aufgeführt.

In der Anfangsphase seines kreativen Schaffens komponierte er Opern wie *Caccia lontana* (Ferne

Jagd) nach einem Libretto von Giovanni Pozza und *Preziosa* auf einen Text von Angelo Zanardini sowie *Bianca da Cervia*, die 1882 an der Mailänder Scala uraufgeführt wurde. Seine vierte Oper aus dieser frühen Phase, *Re Nala* (König Nala) erlebte ihre Premiere 1887 im Theater La Fenice zu Venedig. Smareglia betrachtete seine frühen Opern als misslungene Jugendwerke, obwohl alle bis auf die letzte äußerst erfolgreich waren und von Kritikern und Publikum gleichermaßen gelobt wurden.

Smareglia reifere Schaffensphase begann 1886 mit der Rückkehr von Mailand nach Pula und setzte sich seit 1894 in Vodnjan fort. In dieser Zeit komponierte er so bedeutende Opern wie *Il Vassallo di Szizeth* nach einem Libretto von Francesco Pozza und Luigi Illica, Cornill Schutt (in der revidierten Fassung als *Pittori fiamminghi*, »Flämische Maler«, bekannt geworden) und *Nozze istriane*. Das Libretto dieser »Istrischen Hochzeit« stammt von Luigi Illica, der unter anderem auch die Libretti zu *Manon Lescaut*, *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly* und anderen geschrieben hat. Mit den damals entstandenen Werken fand Smareglia internationale Anerkennung.

Seine drei letzten Opern schrieb Antonio Smareglia auf Libretti von Silvio Benco. Sie gehören zum Genre des *Teatro di poesia* und markieren die späte Schaffensphase des Komponisten: *La Falena* (Die Motte), *Oceana* und *Abisso* (Abgrund).

Sein Leben war von vielen unglücklichen Momenten, falschen Reaktionen oder Zufällen geprägt, die seine Erfolge immer wieder unterbrachen und seine Familie an den Rand des Existenzminimums brachten. Antonio Smareglia war erblindet, als er am 15. April 1929 in der italienischen Stadt Grado verstarb.

Wir schließen diesen Überblick über sein Leben und Werk mit einem Zitat aus Antonio Smareglia Testament, wie es in der Biographie seines Sohnes Ariberto *Das Leben und Werk von Antonio Smareglia* zu finden ist: »Ich hinterlasse meinen lieben Kindern nichts außer meinem künstlerischen Erbe, aus dem ich nicht das Glück schöpfen konnte, das die geheimnisvolle Stimme in meinen Träumen andeutete – ein Traum, der mein ganzes Leben lang anhielt. Es stimmt zwar, dass ein Teil meiner Freunde und Bewunderer anwesend war, aber das war kein Ausgleich für die Reihe von Missgeschicken und Schwierigkeiten, die den größten Teil meines Lebens und das meiner Familie prägten. [...] Rückblickend hätte ich mit meinen Erfahrungen zu dem Schluss kommen müssen, dass eine solche Illusion ein großer Feind des Glückes war, auf das ich in meinen späteren Tagen Anspruch zu haben glaubte – vielleicht weinend, weil ich nicht das diplomatische System beachtet habe, das besser als alles andere sämtliche Probleme in dieser elenden Welt löst.«

– Sofija Cingula

Je mehr ich mich mit der Musik von Antonio Smareglia beschäftige, desto größer ist mein Erstaunen darüber, wie selten man seine Werke aufgeführt. Er war ein außerordentlich begabter Komponist, der den Geist seiner Zeit in jeder Hinsicht gekonnt einfiel: politisch, national, künstlerisch und musikalisch. Sein Vater war Italiener, seine Mutter aber Kroatin aus Istrien, das damals zu Österreich-Ungarn gehörte. Antonio war also von Anfang an das Kind dreier verschiedener Traditionen und Kulturen – eine Tatsache, die sich deutlich

in seiner Musik widerspiegelt. Wir hören die Sprache Wagners und die deutsche Tradition, die wunderbar mit dem italienischen Verismo verbunden sind und durch slawische Melodien und Emotionen abgerundet werden.

Zu Lebzeiten war er sehr beliebt. Seine Werke wurden an den größten Opernhäusern der Welt – New York, Wien, Mailand usw. – aufgeführt. Er hatte die besten Mitarbeiter, die man damals finden konnte (sein Librettist war Luigi Illica), die besten Sänger und Dirigenten widmeten sich seiner Musik – Arturo Toscanini, Tulio Serafin ... Die Frage, warum seine Musik so lange in Vergessenheit geriet, ist bislang noch nicht gänzlich ergründet worden. Die politischen Systeme, die der Monarchie folgten, waren ihm nicht wohlgesonnen, seine nationale Identität und die komplizierte Situation der gesamten Regionen führten bedauerlicherweise zur Vernachlässigung und Missachtung seiner Werke.

Wir können uns jedoch darüber freuen, dass die Zeit seiner Anerkennung gekommen ist. Ich freue mich sehr über die Gelegenheit, Smareglia berühmtestes Werk, die *Nozze istriane*, auf die Bühne zu bringen und vorzustellen. Die Oper ist voller Schönheit, Leidenschaft und Emotionen. Smareglia hat all diese Gefühle meisterhaft in seiner musikalischen Sprache eingefangen. Einerseits ist sie komplex und anspruchsvoll für die Darsteller, andererseits ist sie zugänglich und nahe beim Publikum, das die wesentlichen Botschaften des Werkes beim ersten Hören erfassen und verstehen kann.

Smareglia war ein großer Meister der Orchestrierung. In der gesamten Partitur lassen sich die musikalischen Motive, die mit den verschiedenen Bühnenergebnissen verbunden sind, klar und deutlich verfolgen. Ein jedes Mal, wenn sie auftauchen,

sind sie in leicht variierte Orchesterfarben gekleidet.

Ich hoffe, dass diese Aufführung und Aufnahme, die zugleich eine Feier zum 170. Geburtstag des Komponisten ist, den Beginn einer Renaissance markiert. Ich denke, dass sein Werk einen Platz unter den größten Namen der Musikliteratur verdient.

– Simon Krečić

Ein unterschätztes Opernjuwel des 19. Jahrhunderts

Während meiner Gymnasialzeit entdeckte ich beim Durchstöbern der Noten, die in der Truhe meiner Tante lagen, zufälligerweise zwei Klavierstücke aus Antonio Smareglia's Opern *Oceana* und *Abisso*. Da ich einige Jahre zuvor die Gelegenheit gehabt hatte, seine *Nozze istriane* zu hören (die Oper von Rijeka brachte sie in den frühen sechziger Jahren), wusste ich schon einiges über diesen Komponisten, der trotzdem für mich noch ein Geheimnis war. Jetzt konnte ich seine Musik besser kennenlernen. Meine Neugier war geweckt. Ich spielte Smareglia viele Stunden, bewunderte die überschwengliche Harmonik, den meisterhaften Kontrapunkt und die berausende Stimmung dieser vergessenen Musik.

Ich beschloss, größeres Interesse für das Schaffen dieses istrischen Komponisten zu wecken, und schrieb über seine Werke einen langen musikwissenschaftlichen Artikel, der 1976 in der Zeitschrift *La battana* veröffentlicht wurde und mit Ergänzungen ein Jahr später in der Zagreber *Arti musices* erschien.

Vier Jahre später bot man mir ein symphonisches Konzert mit dem Orchester des Opernhauses Rijeka an. Hier hatte ich nun die Möglichkeit, einige Kompositionen von Smareglia erklingen zu lassen. Ich wählte die außergewöhnliche Ouvertüre zu der Oper *Oceana*, eine seiner gelungensten Kreationen. Ich war sehr stolz und aufgeregt – tatsächlich fand ich auf der letzten Seite der handschriftlichen Partitur die Namen der einzigen Dirigenten, die das Stück bis dahin aufgeführt hatten: Arturo Toscanini, Hans Richter, Richard Strauss und Bernardino Molinari. Der Rang dieser großen Musiker bestärkte mich in meiner Überzeugung, dass unser istrischer Komponist der Erinnerung wert war – vor allem in Kroatien, dessen Sprache und Kinderreime er in frühen Jahren von seiner Mutter gelernt hatte.

Nachdem ich am Kroatischen Nationaltheater von Osijek die Leitung der Oper übernehmen hatte, beschloss ich, die *Nozze istriane* aufzuführen. Dabei handelte es sich um eine außergewöhnliche, beispiellose Koproduktion mit dem Istrischen Volkstheater in Pula unter Leitung des Sängers Krunoslav Cigoj (1949–2015). Das von talentierten jungen Solisten und einem inspirierten Ensemble aufgeführte Werk errang sowohl in Pula und Osijek als auch in Zagreb einen großen Erfolg.

In meiner Eigenschaft als Direktor des Kroatischen Nationaltheaters in Zagreb sorgte ich 2003 für die Aufführung der Oper *Oceana* an der Mailänder Scala – einhundert Jahre nach der Premiere dieses Meisterwerkes, das zuvor lediglich zwei Inszenierungen erlebt hatte. Das war nur einer der bedauerlichen Hinweise auf das ungerechte Schicksal, das Antonio Smareglia zuteil wurde: Als wir 2004 in Zagreb das zweifache Jubiläum seines 150. Geburts- und 75. Todestages mit einem Son-

derkonzert feierten, das Auszüge aus all seinen reinen Werken enthielt, war das die einzige Hommage an den Komponisten.

Nur einem Werke Smareglias ist – wenigstens teilweise – das Los des staubigen Archivdaseins erspart geblieben: den *Nozze istriane*. Paradoerweise kam der Rezeption dieser Oper zugute, dass man sie der damaligen Mode des Verismo zuschlug, obwohl ihr einziges veristisches Element darin besteht, dass das Libretto von Luigi Illica stammt. Die Noblesse und Kunstfertigkeit der Musik sowie das Fehlen einfacher Melodien stehen im Gegensatz zu den Manierismen der Veristen. Antonio Smareglias Musik ist in gewissem Sinne »aristokratisch« und gründet sich auf die Ästhetik des Schönen (was Wunder also, dass Brahms sie schätzte), auf reiche Fantasie und tiefgründige Texte. In ihr verbinden sich auf einzigartige Weise die besten Eigenschaften der deutschen, italienischen und slawischen Traditionen. Es herrscht ein intensives, typisch slawisches Empfinden – das ganz anders ist als die überschwängliche Leidenschaft des Südens. Der französische Nobelpreisträger und Musikwissenschaftler Romain Rolland ordnet Smareglia »zwischen Verdi und Smetana« ein. Obwohl er ein glühender Wagnerianer war (was in Italien zu einer feindseligen Haltung gegenüber seiner Musik beitrug), übernahm er die Postulate der Wagner'schen Reform nur teil- und schrittweise.

In seinen drei letzten Bühnenwerken *Falena*, *Oceana* und *Abisso* zeigt sich die vollständigste Darstellung seiner Opernästhetik, des sogenannten »Poesie-Theaters«, wohingegen die *Nozze istriane* für ihn eine »kleine Oper« darstellte, die er seiner Heimat und seinen Eltern widmete. Dennoch handelt es sich bei dieser um ein missverstandenes Juwel aus dem Opernschaffen des späten 19. Jahr-

hunderts. Die luftige, malerische Orchestrierung, der melodische, harmonische und kontrapunktische Reichtum, das raffinierte Seelenprofil ihrer Personen und die formale Ausgewogenheit überragen das durchschnittliche italienische Opernschaffen jener Zeit.

Die Bemerkung des Meisters, es könne »nur eine slawische Seele solche Musik schreiben«, dürfte seinem damaligen Ruf geschadet haben. Sie war das Öl, das seine Gegner und Konkurrenten ins Feuer gossen. Ich glaube indes, dass heute die Zeit für eine vollständige künstlerische Rehabilitierung Smareglias gekommen ist, wofern man sein Werk von einer neuen, objektiven Warte aus betrachtet. Möge diese Produktion aus Rijeka ein wichtiger Schritt in diese Richtung sein.

– Zoran Juranić

INHALT

Erster Akt

Ein Sturm tobt über der Stadt Dignano. Bald aber kommt die Sonne wieder hinter den Wolken hervor. Der Heiratsvermittler Biagio und Nicola, der Sohn des reichen Placido, unterhalten sich vor der Taverne. Junge Männer versammeln sich, um die Mädchen bei ihrem Kirchgang zu beobachten und zu kommentieren. Als letzte erscheint Marussa, die Tochter des Menico, die von Nicola aufmerksam betrachtet wird. Biagio wartet auf Menico. Er weiß, dass Nicola in dessen Tochter verliebt ist, und macht demzufolge den Vorschlag, sie mit demselben zu verheiraten. Da Biagio nicht von seinem Plan abrückt, erlaubt der misstrauische alte Menico schließlich, dass Nicola Marussa den Hof macht. Nach der Vesper treffen sich Biagio und Nicola, der nach eigenen Worten bereit ist, für Marussa alles zu tun. Luze nähert sich, um Biagio und Menico Walderdbeeren zu verkaufen – vergebens. Daher wendet sie sich an Marussa, die ihr einige der Früchte abkauft.

Bald darauf erscheint Lorenzo und besingt seine Liebe zu Marussa, von der kein Außenstehender etwas ahnt. Die beiden jungen Leute haben Angst vor Menico – insbesondere Marussa, die Lorenzo um Geduld bittet. Sie schenkt ihm ein goldenes Medaillon mit einer Haarlocke ihrer toten Mutter. Er gibt ihr im Gegenzug seinen Ohrring und erneuert den Schwur der ewigen Liebe.

Menico entdeckt die beiden auf dem Hof. Marussa fasst sich ein Herz und gesteht ihre Liebe zu Lorenzo, der sie heiraten will. Der verdrossene Vater lehnt den Antrag überheblich ab und zerrt seine Tochter grob ins Haus.

Zweiter Akt

Menico und Biagio durchstöbern das Haus. Menico erzählt, was am Vorabend geschehen ist und wie er Marussas Beziehung zu Lorenzo beendet habe. Bei ihrer Suche bemerken sie, dass das kleine goldene Medaillon fehlt. Biagio berichtet, er habe aus vertraulichen Quellen erfahren, dass die beiden jungen Leute Liebesgeschenke ausgetauscht hätten. Nun gilt es, Lorenzos Geschenk zu finden und ihm zurückzugeben, damit es so scheint, als sei die Liebe erloschen. Sie finden den goldenen Ohrring hinter dem Standbild der Heiligen Jungfrau. Jetzt soll Luze als Zwischenträgerin ihrer Täuschung agieren. Biagio bringt den Ohrring zu Luze (das heißt: zu Lorenzo), erhält das goldene, herzförmige Medaillon zurück und kann Marussa nunmehr leicht von Lorenzos Sinneswandel überzeugen, da dieser offenbar das Geschenk der Geliebten zurückgegeben hat. Die verzweifelte, vermeintlich betrogene Marussa willigt in die Heirat mit Nicola ein. Sogleich beginnen die Vorbereitungen für die Verlobungsfeier. Plötzlich hört man von der Straße her eine Canzone: Der betrübte Lorenzo singt Spottverse auf Marussa und Menico. Dieser verlässt als erster das Haus, dann folgen Nicola und seine Freunde; auf der Straße kommt es zu einem wütenden Streit. Marussa ist perplex über Lorenzos Vorwurf, sie habe ihn verlassen. Sie ruft ihm zu, er solle fliehen und sein Leben retten.

Dritter Akt

Marussa trifft Hochzeitsvorbereitungen. Luze, die von der bevorstehenden Heirat gehört hat, bringt

der Braut ein Geschenk – ein Haarband, das sie selbst angefertigt hat. Das Mädchen ist zwar angesichts der Hochzeit bekümmert, freut sich aber über die Gabe. Sie bittet Luze, Lorenzo ihr Geschenk zurückzubringen. Diese weiß nicht, dass Biagio sie für seine Intrige missbraucht hat und erwidert, die Rückgabe sei bereits erfolgt. Voller Schrecken muss Marussa erkennen, dass sie getäuscht wurde. Luze ist verzweifelt. Marussa bittet sie, Lorenzo so schnell wie möglich herbeizuholen, damit ihm der ganze Betrug enthüllt werde. Sie wartet auf den Geliebten und hält Nicola samt dem Hochzeitszug auf.

Luze bringt Lorenzo herbei. Marussa berichtet ihm von dem Verrat und erklärt, dass sie ihn noch immer liebe. Lorenzo zeigt ihr das Messer, mit dem er sie erstechen wollte, um sich hernach selbst zu entleiben. Marussa will mit ihm gemeinsam fliehen, doch der junge Mann will sich rächen und in Dignano bleiben. Endlich ist er bereit, Nicola herbeizuholen und ihm die Situation zu erklären. Da klopft dieser an die Tür. Lorenzo verbirgt sich und lauscht.

Marussa fleht Nicola an, sie aus dem Verlöbnis zu entlassen. Er lehnt die Bitte ab, weil er sich nicht zum Gespött der Mitbürger machen will. Das Mädchen gibt nicht auf und fleht ihn inständig an. Als sie den Namen Lorenzo erwähnt, ist Nicola gekränkt. Er weigert sich entschlossen, die Hochzeit zu verschieben. In diesem Augenblick wird er von Lorenzo attackiert, der aber den Kürzeren zieht und von dem flinken, schnellen Nicola tödlich getroffen wird.

Marussas Schreie rufen Menico, Biagio und die Gäste herbei. Die verzweifelte Marussa verflucht die Anwesenden und beugt sich über ihren toten Geliebten.



Simon Krečić

Die Sopranistin **Anamarija Knego** wurde im kroatischen Rijeka geboren, schloss ihr Studium an der Musikakademie Zagreb in den Fächern Flöte und Gesang ab und erhielt ihr Operndiplom. Sie beteiligte sich an mehreren Wettbewerben und erreichte in Saragossa das Finale des Montserrat-Caballé-Wettbewerbs.

Nachdem sie dem Ensemble der Oper Rijeka beigetreten war, erweiterte sie ihr Repertoire auf beeindruckende Weise: In sieben Jahren war sie die führende Sopranistin unter anderem in *Eugen Onegin*, *Otello*, *Falstaff*, *La Bohème*, *Werther*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La traviata*, *Romeo et Juliette*, *Carmen*, *Figaro*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Don Carlo*, *Anna Bolena*, *Elektra* (*Chrysothemis*) und *Nozze istriane*.

Zu ihren internationalen Auftritten gehören Tatjana an der Krakauer Oper (*Onegin*: Mariusz Kwiecień) und Ljubljana sowie die *Carmina burana* und Beethovens neunte Symphonie mit dem Pannon Philharmonic unter Tibor Bogányi; Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare in Egitto*) in der Cankar Hall Ljubljana und in Savonlinna (2022) sowie Mimi an der Oper von Jyväskylä. Sie tritt regelmäßig in den Produktionen und Konzerten des Festivals »Summer Classics« im Amphitheater von Pula (Istrien) auf. Im Jahr 2018 sang sie in der ersten internationalen Aufnahme der berühmten kroatischen Oper *Nikola Šubić Zrinjski* von Ivan Zajc (**cro**) und wurde für ihre Jelena von der Kritik gefeiert. Jüngst hat sie auch mit den Zagreber Philharmonikern und Symphonikern sowie mit dem Kroatischen Rundfunk- und Fernsehchor zusammengearbeitet.

Im Jahr 2015 erhielt Anamarija für die Rolle der Miss Jessel (*The Turn of the Screw*) den Kroatischen Theaterpreis, die wichtigste nationale Auszeichnung, als beste Opernsängerin des Jahres. Außerdem gab es für sie mehrere Publikumsprei-

se des Kroatischen Nationaltheaters Rijeka für ihre Darbietungen als Cleopatra, Cio-Cio San, Violetta und Elisabeth de Valois.

Giorgio Surian wurde in Rijeka geboren und erhielt seine musikalische Ausbildung an der Musikakademie Ljubljana und den Konservatorien von Triest und Padua. Er wurde an der renommierten Opernschule der Mailänder Scala ausgebildet.

Er war erst 20 Jahre alt, als er am Kroatischen Nationaltheater (HNK Ivana pl. Zajca) in Rijeka debütierte und seine erfolgreiche internationale Karriere auf den renommiertesten Bühnen der Welt fortsetzte – der Mailänder Scala, der Metropolitan Opera, der Wiener Staatsoper, der Opera de Lyon, der Arena di Verona, der Opera national de Paris, dem Royal Opera House in London, dem El Liceo in Barcelona, dem Bolschoi-Theater in Moskau, dem Teatro Real in Madrid, den Salzburger Festspielen usw. In Kroatien trat er in den Opernhäusern von Zagreb, Rijeka und Split sowie beim Dubrovnik Summer Festival auf.

Während seiner erfolgreichen Karriere konnte er dank seines breiten Stimmumfangs mehr als 160 Bass- und Bassbaritonrollen in Opern, Messen, Oratorien und anderen Werken übernehmen. Als Basso profondo war er unter anderem in den Rollen des Fiesco (*Simon Boccanegra*) und des Seneca (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*) erfolgreich. Seinem herausragenden schauspielerischen Talent verdankt er die Mitwirkung in einer Reihe komischer Opern. Er hat unter der Leitung von Dirigenten wie Claudio Abbado, Carlos Kleiber, Riccardo Muti, Seiji Ozawa, Lovro von Matačić, Lorin Maazel, Zubin Mehta und Plácido Domingo sowie mit Regisseuren wie Franco Zeffirelli, Ugo De Ana, Luca Ronconi und Werner Herzog gearbeitet.



Anamarija Knego



Giorgio Surian



Filippo Polinelli



Jorge Puerta



Jure Počkaj



Stefany Findrik

Giorgio Surian wurde im Laufe seiner Karriere mit zahlreichen bedeutenden Orden und Preisen seines Landes ausgezeichnet.

Filippo Polinelli wurde 1984 in Tortona geboren. Er begann sein Studium im Jahre 2005 bei der Sopranistin Lorenza Canepa. Nach seinem Debüt an der Mailänder Scala in Massenets *Manon* (2006) erreichte er schnell die wichtigsten Bühnen der italienischen Szene (Teatro Regio di Parma, Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Teatro Massimo di Palermo usw.).

Im Jahr 2009 wurde er für den Opernkurs der Akademie für Darstellende Künste und Kunsthandwerk an der Mailänder Scala ausgewählt, womit er die Möglichkeit hatte, seine technische und interpretatorische Ausbildung bei Lehrern wie Mirella Freni, Renato Bruson, Luis Alva und Luciana Serra zu vertiefen. Im Jahr 2011 wurde ihm ein drittes Jahr zur Spezialisierung auf Giuseppe Verdi angeboten.

Seit 2012 konzentriert sich seine Tätigkeit auf Hauptrollen, mit denen er zahlreiche nationale und internationale Debüts von hohem Rang gegeben hat, wobei er mit prominenten Regisseuren, Dirigenten, Kostüm- und Bühnenbildnern aus aller Welt arbeitete, die die Bühne mit den größten Künstlern der internationalen Szene teilen.

Im Jahr 2016 nahm er während einer Tournee des Teatro Verdi Triest an der feierlichen Eröffnung des Opernhauses Dubai teil. Als erstes Werk in diesem brandneuen Theater gingen Bizets *Pêcheurs de perles* über die Bühne.

Im Jahr 2017 wurde er von Maestro Zubin Mehta persönlich ausgewählt, um am NCPA Peking in einer großartigen Produktion der Wiener Staatsoper den Ford (*Falstaff*) zu spielen. 2018 wurde er vom Teatro Verdi Triest für seine Interpretation des

Giorgio Germont in (*La traviata*) als Nachwuchssänger der Opernsaison 2017/18 ausgezeichnet.

Der aus Venezuela stammende lyrische Tenor **Jorge Puerta** studierte an der Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía in Madrid. Zu seinem Repertoire gehören Rollen wie Rodolfo (*La Bohème*), Radames (*Aida*), Cavaradossi (*Tosca*), Alfredo (*La traviata*), Calaf (*Turandot*), Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*), Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) und Don Carlo (*Don Carlo*). Er gab u. a. Chor- und Solokonzerte in der Royal Festival Hall in London, der Maison de la Radio France in Paris, der Kathedrale von Notre Dame, dem Dom von Mailand und dem Gulbenkian-Theater Lissabon. Zu seinen jüngsten Engagements zählen Rodolfo (*La Bohème*) am Teatro Municipal in Santiago de Chile, Leandro (*Arlecchino*) in Rijeka sowie Radames (*Aida*) an der Semperoper Dresden. Im Jahr 2020 gewann er den Internationalen Rotary-Sonderpreis des Internationalen Lyrischen Gesangswettbewerbs in Ravello, während er 2021 den dritten Platz beim III. Europäischen Opernwettbewerb – Torino in the World belegte.

Von 2022 bis 2024 war Jorge Puerta Ensemblemitglied der Deutschen Oper Berlin und dort u.a. als Radames (*Aida*), Gabriele Adorno (*Simon Boccanegra*) und Calaf (*Turandot*) zu hören.

Jure Počkaj begann seine Ausbildung an der Musikakademie Ljubljana und erwarb seinen Master of Music an der University of California in Los Angeles bei Vladimir Chernov.

Zu seinen Auszeichnungen gehören diverse Stipendien (Mimi-Alpert-Feldman, Phil-Altman, UCLA und Richard-Wagner-Stipendienstützung). Er war

außerdem Goldmedaillengewinner des slowenischen Wettbewerbs für Nachwuchssänger.

Am Slowenischen Nationaltheater in Ljubljana gehörten zu seinen Partien die Titelrolle in Don Giovanni, Figaro (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Taddeo (*L'italiana in Algeri*), Miller (*Luisa Miller*), Giorgio Germont (*La traviata*) und Il conte di Luna (*Il trovatore*).

Zu seinen Engagements gehörten Aufführungen beim Mozart-Festival Pravets, am Slowenischen Nationaltheater in Maribor, eine Tournee mit der Accademia Lirica Santa Croce Triest und *Don Giovanni* im Palais Eschenbach in Wien sowie die Rolle des Mannes in der Uraufführung von Juraj Marko Žerovniks *Davanti alla legge* beim Piccolo Opera Festival am Kroatischen Nationaltheater in Split.

Seit 2024 ist Počkaj Solist am Kroatischen Nationaltheater Ivan pl. Zajc in Rijeka, wo er auch Rollen wie Harlekin in Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Nicola in Smareglias *Nozze istriane*, Lescaut in Puccinis *Manon Lescaut* und Alberich in Wagners *Rheingold* übernommen hat. Sein Debüt im Vereinigten Königreich gab er 2024 mit einem Neujahrskonzert für Raymond Gubbay Ltd. in der Liverpooler Philharmonic Hall.

Die kroatische Mezzosopranistin **Stefany Findrik** begann ihre musikalische Ausbildung im Jahre 2012 an der Kunstakademie der Universität Split, wo sie 2016 mit dem »Rektorenpreis« für herausragende Leistungen ausgezeichnet wurde. 2017 schloss sie ihr Studium in der Klasse von Terezija Kusanović mit der Nerona in Monteverdis *Incoronazione di Poppea* ab. Im selben Jahr trat sie dem Ensemble des Kroatischen Nationaltheater Osijek bei, wo sie Mercedes in *Carmen* debütierte. In der Spielzeit 2018/2019 erhielt sie den Status einer Opernsolistin;

seither wirkte sie an zahlreichen Konzert- und Opernproduktionen des Theaters mit – darunter vor allem als Titelheldin in Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila*.

Als Mamma Lucia (*Cavalleria rusticana*) hörte man sie in der Eröffnungsproduktion des Split Summer Festival 2021, in der folgenden Saison gab sie ihr Debüt am Kroatischen Nationaltheater Zagreb mit Flora Bervoix in *La traviata*. Seit 2024 gehört Stefany Findrik zum Solistenensemble des Kroatischen Nationaltheaters Ivan pl. Zajc in Rijeka. Hier gab sie ihren Einstand als Luze in Antonio Smareglias *Nozze istriane* und als Fricka in einer bemerkenswerten *Rheingold*-Inszenierung.

Die Teilnahme an nationalen und internationalen Gesangswettbewerben wurde mit dem zweiten Platz beim Papandopulo-Wettbewerb 2017 und der Teilnahme an den Finalrunden des Wettbewerbs Hans Gabor Belvedere in Jurmali 2018, Villach 2019 und Erfurt 2021 gekrönt.

Opernkompanie des Kroatischen Nationaltheaters Ivan p. Zajc Rijeka

Die Operntradition der Stadt Rijeka reicht bis ins 19. Jahrhundert zurück. Zur Einweihung des neuen Teatro Comunale dirigierte Maestro Gaetano Cimini am 3. Oktober 1885 Giuseppe Verdi *Aida*, die noch nie zuvor in Rijeka zu hören gewesen war. Bei der Aufführung wirkten prominente Künstlerinnen mit: Medea Borelli, Clotilde Sartori und Mary Guttenberg. In den folgenden Jahren gastierten zahlreiche bekannte Persönlichkeiten der Opernszene in der Stadt. Darunter waren Giacomo Puccini (1895) und Pietro Mascagni (1924), Enrico Caruso (1898), Beniamino Gigli (1941) und Zinka Kunc Milanov (1948 und 1950).

Die gegenwärtige Opernkompanie wurde am 4. Januar 1946 gegründet und besteht derzeit aus dem Symphonieorchester, dem Opernchor und einem solistischen Vokalensemble. Neben der Oper gibt es drei weitere Kompanien am Kroatischen Nationaltheater, das den Namen des Komponisten Ivan Zajc trägt und 1946 nicht zufällig mit einer Aufführung seines *Nikola Šubić Zrinski* eröffnet wurde. Die musikalische Leitung lag in den Händen von Boris Papandopulo, einem der führenden kroatischen Komponisten des 20. Jahrhunderts, der damals als künstlerischer Direktor der Kompanie wirkte.

In den letzten zehn Jahren hat die Oper von Rijeka ihr Repertoire bedeutend erweitert. Man inszenierte Werke von Händels *Giulio Cesare* in *Egitto*, Purcells *Dido and Aeneas*, Mozarts *Don Giovanni* und *Le nozze di Figaro* über Bellinis *Norma* und Donizettis *Le convenienze ed inconvenienze teatrali* und Anna Bolena, Verdis *Macbeth*, *Otello* und *Falstaff*, Wagners *Tristan und Isolde* und *Rheingold*,

Massenets *Werther* und Gounods *Romeo et Juliette* bis hin zu Puccinis *Madama Butterfly*, *La Bohème*, *La fanciulla del West* und *Tosca*, Giordanos *Andrea Chenier*, Strauss' *Elektra* und *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Strawinskys *Oedipus Rex*, Ferruccio Busonis *Arlecchino*, Schönbergs *Erwartung* und *Powder Her Face* von Thomas Adès.

Symphonieorchester Rijeka (RSO)

Das Symphonieorchester Rijeka widmet sich der Aufführung von Opern und Balletten sowie einem breiten Repertoire an symphonischer Musik.

Im Laufe seiner Geschichte haben viele ausgezeichnete nationale und internationale Dirigenten das Orchester des Kroatischen Nationaltheaters Rijeka geleitet, das seinen neuen Namen erhielt, als Rijeka die Europäische Kulturhauptstadt war (2020). Unter den renommierten Orchesterleitern finden wir die historischen Namen Boris Papandopulo, Lovro von Matačić, Ivo Malec sowie – in jüngerer Zeit – die Dirigenten Nikša Barezja, Vjekoslav Šutej, Ivan Repušić, Tibor Boganyi, Marco Boemi, Philipp von Steinaecker, Paolo Olmi, David Gimenez und Ville Matvejeff, der von 2014 bis 2020 erster Gastdirigent des RSO war. Seit 2021 ist Valentin Engel der Generalmusikdirektor des RSO.

Unter den Solisten, die mit dem Orchester musizierten, finden sich so bekannte Persönlichkeiten wie die Sänger(innen) Sumi Jo, Maria Guleghina, Dunja Vejzović, Elena Mosuc, Maida Hundeling, José Carreras, Yusif Eyvazov, José Cura, Carlo Colombara, Lucio Gallo, Giorgio Surian und Lars Cleveman sowie Instrumentalisten wie Maxim Fedotov, Stefan Milenkovich, Dan Zhu, Monika Leskovar, Enrico Bronzi, Federico Colli, Michail Lifits, Aljoša Jurinić, Goran Filipec, Martina Filjak,

Boštjan Lipovšek, Gustav Rivinius Petrit Çeku und zuletzt Ivo Pogorelič. In den letzten Jahren hat die Opernkompanie Rijeka mit ihrem Chor und Orchester die Konzerte für Klavier und für Violine von Boris Papandopulo (**cpo**), den *Faust* von Charles Gounod (Naxos) und Franz von Suppés *Il ritorno del marinaio* (**cpo**) sowie – mit dem Bariton Lucio Gallo – ein Album mit Arien von Giuseppe Verdis *Macbeth*, *Otello* und *Falstaff* aufgenommen.

Der slowenische Dirigent und Pianist **Simon Krečič** schloss im Jahr 2002 sein Klavierstudium an der Musikakademie Ljubljana als letzter Absolvent des renommierten Pianisten Aci Bertoneclj ab. Im Juli 2005 beendete er sein postgraduelles Klavierstudium an der Hochschule der Künste in Bern in der Klasse von Aleksander Madžar. Im September 2012 folgte der Abschluss im Fach Dirigieren, als Krečič als Schüler der Klasse Milivoj Šurbek die Premiere sowie neun Folgeaufführung eines Strawinskij-Ballettabends leitete, den die Oper und das Ballett des slowenischen Nationaltheaters in Ljubljana inszeniert hatten.

Während seines Klavierstudiums in der Schweiz studierte er Dirigieren bei Dominique Roggen. Darnals dirigierte er mehrere Schweizer Orchester. In der Spielzeit 2006/2007 arbeitete er als Korrepetitor an der Oper Maribor. Seit März 2009 ist er regelmäßiger Gastdirigent des Slowenischen Philharmonischen Orchesters. Darüber hinaus ist er regelmäßiger Gastdirigent des RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra.

Er hat mit zahlreichen prominenten slowenischen und internationalen Solisten zusammengearbeitet. Besonders hervorzuheben ist sein Engagement im Bereich der zeitgenössischen Musik. Er

dirigierte zahlreiche Konzerte beim slowenischen Slowind-Festival sowie in Paris und Riga. Er brachte verschiedene Werke bedeutender slowenischer und internationaler Komponisten zur Uraufführung und hat mit wichtigen Solisten zusammengearbeitet. Im Dezember 2013 wurde er zum künstlerischen Leiter der Oper Maribor ernannt. Im März 2019 verlieh ihm die Stadt Maribor für seine Leistungen im Kulturbereich die Glazer-Urkunde.

Zu seinen jüngsten Produktionen zählen Jacques Offenbachs Oper *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* und Tschairowskys *Jungfrau von Orleans* in Ljubljana, Puccinis *Turandot* in Rovigo und Ferrara, Donizettis *L'elisir d'amore* in Triest und ein Ballett-Galaabend im Massimo-Theater in Palermo. Jüngst hat er auch die Philharmonischen Orchester von Zagreb und Prag dirigiert.



Anamarija Knego & Rijeka Opera Chorus



Bože Jurić-Pešić, Giorgio Surian, Anamarija Knego



Ensemble

The Life of Antonio Smareglia

Opera composer Antonio Smareglia was born on 5 May 1854, in Pula. His education began in Rijeka, where he studied in Croatian for the first two years. He continued his studies in the third grade in Italian in Koper, and then he attended school in Pazin and Gorizia in German. This pluralism of cultures, national influences, and identity markers accompanied him from early childhood and is reflected in his work, making it, in a sense, both universal and particular—insufficient for the national narratives that claimed him or denied him, depending on the moment or historical context.

Antonio Smareglia became acquainted with contemporary cultural and musical events during his schooling in Vienna and Graz when he decided to study music exclusively. His parents supported this intention, and Smareglia moved to Milan to continue his studies (initially privately, and then at the Conservatory). Arrigo Boito introduced him to the cultural movement and artistic circle of Scapigliatura, which promoted a new musical reform aimed at revitalizing Italian art and culture.

During his lifetime, Smareglia's operas were performed at prestigious venues such as La Scala in Milan, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Imperial Theatre in Vienna, the Royal Theatre in Dresden, and many other significant theaters and opera houses.

In the early phase of his creative output, he composed operas such as *"Caccia lontana"* (Distant Hunt) to a libretto by Giovanni Pozza, *"Preziosa,"* with a libretto by Angelo Zanardini, and *"Bianca da Cervia,"* which premiered at La Scala in 1882. His fourth opera from this early phase, *"Re Nala"* (King Nala), premiered in 1887 at the Venetian theatre

La Fenice. Smareglia regarded his early operas as unsuccessful youthful endeavors, although all except the last were extremely successful and praised by critics and audiences alike.

His more mature creative period began in 1886, with Smareglia's return from Milan to Pula and then to Vodnjan in 1894. During this time, he composed significant operas such as *"Il Vassallo di Szigeth"* (The Vassal of Szigeth) to a libretto by Francesco Pozza and Luigi Illica, *"Cornill Schutt,"* later revised and known as *"Pittori fiamminghi"* (Flemish Painters), and *"Nozze Istriane"* (Istrian Wedding). The latter was set to a libretto by Luigi Illica, who also wrote librettos for operas like *"Manon Lescaut,"* *"La Bohème,"* *"Tosca,"* *"Madama Butterfly,"* and others. In this period and with these compositions, Smareglia gained international recognition.

The last three of Smareglia's operas were written to librettos by Silvio Benco. They belong to the genre of Teatro di poesia and mark the late period of his creative output, consisting of the operas *"La Falena"* (The Moth), *"Oceana,"* and *"Abisso"* (Abyss).

His life was marked by many unfortunate moments, wrong reactions, or coincidences that interrupted his successes at various stages and returned his family to the brink of existence. He died blind in the Italian town of Grado on 15 April 1929.

We conclude this overview of his life and work with a quote from Antonio Smareglia's will, taken from the biography *The Life and Work of Antonio Smareglia* by Ariberto Smareglia, his son: "I leave nothing to my dear children except my artistic heritage, from which I could not gain the happiness that the mysterious voice hinted at in my dreams, a dream that lasted my entire life. It is true that part of my friends and admirers was present, but this

did not compensate for the series of misfortunes and difficulties that marked most of my existence and that of my family. (...) In retrospect, with experience, I should have concluded that such an illusion was a great enemy of the happiness I felt entitled to—in my later days—perhaps even crying because I did not follow that diplomatic system which better than anything else resolves all difficulties in this miserable world.”

– *Sofija Cingula*

The more I study the music of Antonio Smareglia, the more I am amazed at how rarely his works are performed. He was a composer of exceptional talent who skillfully captured the spirit of his time in every sense: politically, nationally, artistically, and musically. His father was Italian, and his mother was a Croat from Istria, which was then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. From the very beginning, he was a son of three different traditions and cultures, which is clearly reflected in his music. We hear Wagner’s language and the German tradition beautifully combined with the Italian verismo style, all rounded off with Slavic melodies and emotions.

During his time, he was very popular and was performed in the world’s greatest opera houses: New York, Vienna, Milan ... He had the best collaborators of his time (librettist Luigi Illica) and was performed by the finest singers and conductors: Arturo Toscanini, Tulio Serafin ... We do not know exactly all the reasons why his music has remained so long forgotten. The political systems following the monarchy were not favorable to him, and his national identity and the complex situation in the

entire region unfortunately led to the neglect and obscurity of his works.

However, we can be happy that the time has come for his art to be recognized. I am very pleased that we have the opportunity to stage and present his most famous work, “Nozze Istriane.” The opera is full of beauty, passion, and emotion. Smareglia masterfully cloaked all these feelings in his musical language. On one hand, it is complex and challenging for performers, while on the other, it is accessible and close to listeners who can grasp and understand the essential messages of the work upon first encounter.

Smareglia was a great master of orchestration. Throughout the entire score, we can clearly follow musical motifs that connect with various events on stage. Each time they appear, they are dressed in slightly different orchestral colors.

I hope that this performance and recording, which is also a celebration of the 170th anniversary of the composer’s birth, will mark the beginning of a renaissance for his music. I believe his work deserves a place among the greatest names in musical literature.

– *Simon Krečič*

An Underestimated Operatic Gem from the Nineteenth Century

In secondary school, while I was looking through old musical texts stored in the trunk belonging to my father’s sister, I chanced to find two works for piano taken from operas by Antonio Smareglia: *Oceana* and *Abisso*. Since some years before I had had the opportunity to become acquainted with his

Nozze Istriane (staged at the Rijeka Opera during the early 1960s), I already knew some things about this composer who for me was a mystery. The opportunity to become acquainted in greater detail with his music piqued my curiosity, and I found myself playing *Smareglia* for many hours on end while admiring the exuberant harmony, masterful counterpoint, and exhilarating atmosphere of this forgotten music. Having decided to inspire greater interest in the music of this Istrian composer, I wrote a long musicological article about his works that was published first in the journal *La battana* in 1976 and then a year later (with additions) in the Zagreb musicological journal *Arti musices*.

Four years later, when I was invited to perform a symphony concert with the orchestra of the Rijeka Opera, I had the opportunity to revive some works by *Smareglia* in musical performance. I selected the extraordinary overture of the opera *Oceana*, one of the most successful pages in his oeuvre. I was very emotional and proud—in fact, on the last page of the manuscript score I had found the names of the only four conductors who had previously performed this piece of music: Arturo Toscanini, Hans Richter, Richard Strauss, and Bernardino Molinari. The importance of these great musicians strengthened my conviction that our Istrian composer deserved to be remembered, particularly in Croatia, where during his early childhood he had learned its language and nursery rhymes from his mother.

After I had assumed the post of conductor of the Croatian National Opera in Osijek, I decided to stage the opera *Nozze Istriane*. It was an exceptional and unprecedented coproduction with the Istrian National Theater of Pula under its late director Krunoslav Cigoj. Performed by talented young soloists and an inspired ensemble, the opera cele-

brated great successes in Pula and Osijek as well as in Zagreb.

In 2003, in my capacity as conductor of the Croatian National Theater of Zagreb, I staged *Oceana* to commemorate the centenary of its premiere at La Scala in Milan. It was only the third presentation of this masterpiece by *Smareglia*. Regrettably, it was only one of the indicators pointing to the unjust fate to which the works of this composer had been subjected. One year later, in 2004, when we celebrated *Smareglia*'s double anniversary in Zagreb—the 150th anniversary of this Istrian master's birth and the seventy-fifth anniversary of his death—with a special concert featuring pieces taken from all the works of his mature period—we were the only ones who paid tribute to Antonio *Smareglia*.

The *Nozze Istriane* is the only opera by *Smareglia* that has partially avoided the fate of lying covered with dust in the archives. Paradoxically, its acceptance was facilitated by its inclusion in the fashionable current of the veristic operas in vogue during the epoch, even though its only veristic element was the libretto by Luigi Illica. The nobility and the fine craftsmanship of its music and the absence of simple melodies without sharp contrasts are completely opposed to the mannerisms of veristic composers. In a certain sense the music of Antonio *Smareglia* is "aristocratic" and based on the aesthetic of beauty (it is not surprising that it was appreciated by Brahms) and on a rich imagination and profound texts. It combines in a unique way the best characteristics of the German, Italian, and Slavic musical traditions. Its sensibility is typically Slavic and intense, in contrast to exuberant Mediterranean passion. The Nobel laureate and French musicologist Romain Rolland classified it "between Verdi and Smetana." Although *Smareglia* was a fer-

vent Wagnerian (which contributed to the hostile attitude toward his works in Italy), he implemented the postulates of the Wagnerian reform only partially and gradually.

Although Smareglia maintained that his last three operas—*Falena*, *Oceana*, and *Abisso*—represented the most complete affirmation of his operatic aesthetic (the so-called *Teatro di poesia*) and defined the *Nozze Istriane* as a “little opera” dedicated to his native land and to his parents, this opera is a misunderstood gem in the operatic production from the end of the nineteenth century. Its arioso and picturesque orchestration, its melodic, harmonic, and contrapuntal richness, the sophisticated psychological profiles of its characters, and its formal harmony mean that it rises above the average in operatic creativity in the Italy of its times. The Maestro’s declarations to the effect that “only a Slavic soul is able to dictate such music” must have been detrimental to his reputation at the time; it was oil poured on the fire of his adversaries and rivals. Nevertheless, I believe that today, when we examine Smareglia’s work from a new and objective perspective, the time has come for his full artistic rehabilitation. It is our intention to have our production from Rijeka represent one important step in this direction.

– Zoran Juranić

Synopsis

Act I

The little country town of Dignano is being hit by a storm, but soon the sun shines from the clouds. The marriage broker Biagio and Nicola, the son of the rich Placido, are chatting in front of the Osteria. Other local youths who have gathered there are watching the girls going to church and commenting on them. The last girl in line is Marussa, Menico’s daughter, whom Nicola yearningly watches. Biagio waits for Menico. Knowing that Nicola is in love with his daughter, Biagio proposes that Menico have Marussa wed Placido’s son. Since Biagio is implacable in his powers of persuasion, the mistrustful and avaricious old man finally permits Nicola to court his daughter. When the afternoon mass is over, Biagio meets Nicola, who tells him that he is ready to do everything for Marussa. Luze enters to sell wild strawberries to Biagio and Menico—but without success. She then turns to Marussa, who buys some strawberries from her.

Lorenzo soon enters and sings in love of his fondness for Marussa. Nobody knows of their love. Both of them—and especially Marussa—are afraid of Menico. Marussa asks Lorenzo to be patient and gives him a gold locket containing a lock of her late mother’s hair. He gives her his earring and reiterates his vow of eternal love.

Menico finds them in the courtyard. His daughter plucks up courage and confesses that she is in love with Lorenzo, who wants to marry her. Her father, who does not like the idea, arrogantly rejects the proposal and roughly drags his daughter into the house.

Act II

Menico and Biagio conduct a search of the house. Menico recounts what happened the night before and how he ended the relationship between Marussa and Lorenzo. During the search they note that the little gold heart is missing. Biagio reports to him that he has learned from confidential sources that the couple exchanged love tokens. Now they need to find Lorenzo's gift and to give it back to him to make it seem as if the love affair is over. They find his gift, a gold earring, behind the statue of the Virgin. After they have found it, they decide to have Luze serve as an intermediary in this dishonest business. After they have taken the earring to Luze or Lorenzo, Biagio returns with the little gold heart and easily convinces Marussa that Lorenzo has changed his mind and has decided to give her back her gift. Desperate and betrayed, Marussa agrees to marry Nicola. The preparations for the betrothal ceremony immediately get underway. All of a sudden a song is heard from the street; it is Lorenzo. The offended lover sings verses mocking Marussa and Menico. First Menico and then Nicola and his friends, filled with rage, go down to the street to dispute with him. Marussa feels perplexed by the accusations made by Lorenzo, who maintains that she has left him. She shouts to Lorenzo to flee and to save his life.

Act III

Marussa is readying herself for the wedding. Luze, who has heard of the wedding, brings a gift to Marussa—a ribbon to wear in her hair that she has made for her. Even though she is sad about the wedding, Marussa welcomes the gift. She decides

to ask Luze to return Lorenzo's gift to him. Unaware that she is involved in Biagio's intrigue, Luze tells her that she has already done so. The perplexed Marussa realizes that she has been tricked. While Luze despairs, Marussa begs her to call Lorenzo as soon as possible so that she can reveal the whole scheme to him. While she is waiting for Lorenzo, Marussa takes her time and keeps Nicola and the wedding procession waiting.

Luze brings Lorenzo to Marussa, who reveals the intrigue to him and tells him that she still loves him. Lorenzo shows her the knife that he has ready to kill her and then to take his own life. Marussa proposes that they flee, but Lorenzo wants to take revenge and to remain in Dignano. In the end she agrees to summon Nicola and to explain the situation to him. At this very moment Nicola knocks at the door. Lorenzo hides and listens.

Marussa begs Nicola to release her from the betrothal. Nicola rejects her pleas because he does not want to become an object of scorn for his fellow residents of Dignano. Marussa does not yield and continues to plead for herself and for Lorenzo. At the mention of Lorenzo's name, Nicola feels offended and resolutely refuses to call off the wedding. At this very moment the armed Lorenzo attacks him, but Nicola is nimbler and faster and deals him a mortal blow. When they hear Marussa's shouts, Menico, Biagio, and the wedding guests come to help. The despondent Marussa curses all of them and leans over her dead lover.

The soprano **Anamarija Knego**, born in Rijeka, concluded her studies in the fields of flute and voice at the Zagreb Music Academy, where she also received her opera diploma. She participated in several competitions and reached the finals at the Montserrat Caballé Competition in Zaragoza. After she had joined the Rijeka Opera ensemble, she expanded her repertoire in an impressive manner. During seven years she was the leading soprano in works such as *Eugene Onegin*, *Otello*, *Falstaff*, *La bohème*, *Werther*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La traviata*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Carmen*, *Figaro*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Don Carlo*, *Anna Bolena*, *Elektra* (Chrysothemis), and *Nozze Istriane*.

Her international appearances include the role of Tatyana at the Cracow Opera (*Onegin*: Mariusz Kwiecień) and Ljubljana, parts in the *Carmina Burana* and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Pannon Philharmonic under Tibor Bogányi, the role of Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare in Egitto*) at Cankar Hall in Ljubljana and in Savonlinna (2002) and that of Mimi (*La bohème*) at the Jyväskylä Opera.

She regularly appears in productions and concerts at the Summer Classics Festival in the Pula Amphitheater in Istria. In 2018 she sang in the first international recording of Ivan Zajc's famous Croatian opera *Nikola Šubić Zrinski* (**cpo**) and was acclaimed by the critics for her interpretation of the role of Jelena. Most recently, she has cooperated with the Zagreb Philharmonic and Symphony Orchestras as well as with the Croatian Radio and Television Chorus.

In 2015 she received the Croatian Theater Prize, the country's most important award, as the year's best opera singer for the role of Miss Jessel (*The Turn of the Screw*). In addition, she has won several audience prizes from the Croatian National Theater

of Rijeka for her performances as Cleopatra, Cio-Cio San, Violetta, and Elisabeth de Valois.

Giorgio Surian, born in Rijeka, received his training in music at the Ljubljana Music Academy and the Trieste and Padua Conservatories as well as at the renowned Opera School of the Milan Scala.

He was only twenty years old when he made his debut at the Croatian National Theater (HNK Ivan pl. Zajc) in Rijeka. He then continued his successful international career on the world's most renowned stages, including the Milan Scala, Metropolitan Opera, Vienna State Opera, Opéra de Lyon, Arena di Verona, Opéra National de Paris, Royal Opera House in London, Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, Bolshoi Theater in Moscow, Teatro Real in Madrid, and Salzburg Festival. In Croatia he has appeared at the Zagreb, Rijeka, and Split Opera Houses and at the Dubrovnik Summer Festival.

During his successful career Surian's broad vocal range has enabled him to sing more than 160 bass and bass-baritone parts in operas, masses, oratorios, and other works. As a *basso profundo* he has celebrated successes in roles such as Fiesco (*Simon Boccanegra*) and Seneca (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*). He has developed his outstanding acting talent by participating in a number of comic operas.

He has performed under conductors such as Claudio Abbado, Carlos Kleiber, Riccardo Muti, Seiji Ozawa, Lovro von Matačić, Lorin Maazel, Zubin Mehta, and Plácido Domingo and with directors such as Franco Zeffirelli, Ugo De Ana, Luca Ronconi, and Werner Herzog.

During his career Giorgio Surian has been awarded numerous prestigious Croatian orders of merit and prizes.

Filippo Polinelli was born in Tortona in 1984 and began his studies with the soprano Lorenza Canepa in 2005. After his debut at the Milan Scala in Massenet's *Manon Lescaut* (2006) he quickly made his way to Italy's most important stages, among them: the Teatro Regio di Parma, Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, and Teatro Massimo di Palermo.

In 2009 he was selected for the opera course at Milan's Accademia Teatro alla Scala, which offered him the opportunity to deepen his technical and interpretive skills with teachers such as Mirella Freni, Renato Bruson, Luis Alva, and Luciana Serra. In 2011 an offer for a third year was extended to him for specialization in Giuseppe Verdi.

Since 2012 Polinelli's activity has focused on leading roles in which he has presented numerous national and international debuts of high rank and worked with prominent directors, conductors, and costume and stage designers from around the globe who share the stage with the greatest performing artists in the international opera world.

In 2016 he participated in the gala opening of the Dubai Opera House during a tour by the Teatro Verdi of Trieste. Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles* was the first work staged at the brand-new theater.

In 2017 Maestro Zubin Mehta personally chose Polinelli to perform in a magnificent Vienna State Opera production of *Falstaff* at the NCPA in Peking. In 2018 the Teatro Verdi of Trieste named him the best young singer of the 2017/18 opera season for his interpretation of Giorgio Germont in *La traviata*.

The lyric tenor **Jorge Puerta**, who hails from Venezuela, studied at the Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía in Madrid. His repertoire includes roles such as Rodolfo (*La bohème*), Radamès (*Aida*), Cavaradossi (*Tosca*), Alfredo (*La traviata*), Calaf (*Turandot*), Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*), Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), and Don Carlo (*Don Carlo*). He has performed in choral and solo concerts at venues such as the Royal Festival Hall in London, Maison de la Radio France in Paris, Notre Dame Cathedral, Milan Cathedral, and Gulbenkian Theater in Lisbon. The roles of Rodolfo at the Teatro Municipal in Santiago de Chile, Leandro (*Arlecchino*) in Rijeka, and Radamès at the Semperoper in Dresden number among his most recent engagements.

He won the Rotary International Special Prize at the International Lyric Song Competition in Ravello in 2020 and the third prize at the III European Opera Competition – Torino in the World in 2021. From 2022 to 2024 he was an ensemble member at the German Opera of Berlin, where he sang roles such as those of Radamès, Gabriele Adorno (*Simon Boccanegra*), and Calaf.

Jure Počkaj began his training at the Ljubljana Music Academy and earned his Master of Music degree under Vladimir Chernov at the University of California, Los Angeles. His awards include various scholarships (Mimi Alpert Feldman, Phil Altman, UCLA, and Richard-Wagner-Stipendienstiftung). In addition, he was the gold medal winner at the Slovenian Competition for Young Artists.

His roles at the Slovenian National Theater in Ljubljana included the title role in *Don Giovanni*, Figaro (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Taddeo (*L'italiana in Algeri*), Miller (*Luisa Miller*), Giorgio Germont (*La traviata*), and Il Conte di Luna (*Il trovatore*).

Performances at the Mozart Festival in Pravets and the Slovenian National Theater in Maribor, a tour with the Accademia Lirica Santa Croce of Trieste and *Don Giovanni* at the Palais Eschenbach in Vienna, and the role of The Man in the premiere of Juraj Marko Žerovnik's *Davanti alla legge* at the Piccolo Opera Festival at the Croatian National Theater in Split have numbered among his engagements.

Since 2004 Počkaj has been a soloist at the Croatian National Theater Ivan pl. Zajc in Rijeka, where he has performed roles such as the Harlequin in Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Nicola in Smareglia's *Nozze Istriane*, Lescaut in Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*, and Alberich in Wagner's *Rheingold*. His debut in the United Kingdom occurred in 2014 in conjunction with the New Year's Concert for Raymond Gubbay Ltd at Liverpool's Philharmonic Hall.

The Croatian mezzo-soprano **Stefany Findrik** began her training in music in 2012 at the University of Split's Academy of the Arts, where she was awarded the Rector's Prize for her outstanding achievements. In 2017 she concluded her studies in Terezija Kusanović's class in the role of Nerone in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. During the same year she joined the ensemble of the Croatian National Theater in Osijek, where she debuted as Mercedes in *Carmen*. During the 2018/19 season she obtained the status of an opera soloist, and since then she has performed in numerous concert and opera productions, especially as the eponymous heroine in Saint-Saens's *Samson et Dalila*.

She sang the role of Mamma Lucia (*Cavalleria rusticana*) in the opening production of the Split Summer Festival in 2021, and during the following season she debuted as Flora Bervoix in *La traviata* at the Croatian National Theater in Zagreb. Since 2024 she has been a member of the ensemble of soloists at the Croatian National Theater Ivan pl. Zajc in Rijeka, where she debuted as Luze in Antonio Smareglia's *Nozze Istriane* and as Fricka in a remarkable staging of *Das Rheingold*.

Stefany Findrik's participation in national and international song competitions brought her the second prize at the Papandopulo Competition in 2017, and she was a finalist at the Hans Gabor Belvedere Competition in Jürjala in 2018, in Villach in 2019, and in Erfurt in 2021.

Opera Company of the Croatian National Theater Ivan pl. Zajc Rijeka

The opera tradition in the city of Rijeka goes back to the nineteenth century. At the opening of the new Teatro Comunale on 3 October 1885, Maestro Gaetano Cimini conducted Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida*, which had never been heard before in Rijeka. The prominent female singers Medea Borelli, Clotilde Sartori, and Mary Guttenberg performed on this occasion. During the following years numerous famous opera personalities, including Giacomo Puccini (1895) and Pietro Mascagni (1924), Enrico Caruso (1898), and Beniamino Gigli (1941) and Zinka Kunc Milanov (1948 and 1950), performed as guests in the city.

The current opera company was founded on 4 January 1946 and today consists of the Symphony Orchestra, the Opera Chorus, and a vocal ensemble of soloists. Along with the Croatian Drama, Italian Drama and Ballet company, the Rijeka Opera is the largest of the four companies of the Croatian National Theater of Rijeka bearing the name of the composer Ivan Zajc, whose *Nikola Šubić Zrinjski* was chosen for the opening performance in 1946. Boris Papandopulo, one of the leading Croatian composers of the twentieth century and the artistic director of the company at the time, conducted the work.

During the last ten years the Rijeka Opera's repertoire has undergone significant expansion. It has staged works ranging from Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and *Le nozze di Figaro*, through Bellini's *Norma*, Donizetti's *Le convenienze ed inconvenienze teatrali* and *Anna Bolena*, Verdi's *Macbeth*, *Otello*, and *Falstaff*, Wagner's *Tristan*

and *Isolde* and *Rheingold*, Massenet's *Werther*, and Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*, to Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, *La bohème*, *La fanciulla del West*, and *Tosca*, Giordano's *Andrea Chenier*, Strauss's *Elektra* and *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*, Ferruccio Busoni's *Arlecchino*, Schönberg's *Erwartung*, and Thomas Adès's *Powder Her Face*.

The Rijeka Symphony Orchestra (RSO)

The Rijeka Symphony Orchestra is dedicated to the performance of operas and ballets and to a broad repertoire of symphonic music.

During the course of its history many outstanding conductors from Croatia and other countries have conducted the Orchestra of the Croatian National Theater of Rijeka, which received its new name when Rijeka was the European Cultural Capital in 2020. The list of conductors who have led the orchestra includes historical personages such as Boris Papandopulo, Lovro von Matačić, and Ivo Malec as well as—in more recent times—Nikša Barez, Vjekoslav Šutej, Ivan Repušić, Tibor Bogányi, Marco Boemi, Philipp von Steinaecker, Paolo Olmi, David Giménez, and Ville Matvejeff, who was the RSO's principal guest conductor from 2014 to 2020. Since 2021 Valentin Engel has been the RSO's general music director.

The list of soloists who have performed with the orchestra includes famous personalities such as the singers Sumi Jo, Maria Guleghina, Dunja Vejzović, Elena Mosuc, Maida Hundeling, José Carreras, Yusif Eyvazov, José Cura, Carlo Colombara, Lucio Gallo, Giorgio Surian, and Lars Cleveman as well as the instrumentalists Max Fedotov, Stefan Milenkovich, Dan Zhu, Monika Leskovar, Enrico Bronzi, Federico Colli, Aljoša Jurinić, Goran Filipec, Mar-

tina Filjak, Boštjan Lipošek, Gustav Rivinius, Petrit Çeku—and most recently Ivo Pogorelich. During the last years the Rijeka Opera Company, with its chorus and orchestra, has recorded Boris Papandopulo's *Concertos for Piano and Violin (cpo)*, Charles Gounod's *Faust*, and Franz von Suppé's *Il ritorno del marinaio (cpo)* as well as an album with the baritone Lucio Gallo featuring arias from Giuseppe Verdi's *Macbeth*, *Otello*, and *Falstaff*.

The Slovenian conductor and pianist **Simon Krečič** completed his study of piano at the Ljubljana Music Academy as the last graduate taught by the renowned pianist Aci Bertoneclj. In July 2005 he concluded his postgraduate study of piano in Aleksandar Madžar's piano class at the Bern College of the Arts. Krečič's degree in conducting followed in September 2012, when he was enrolled in Milivoj Šurbek's class and led the premiere and nine subsequent performances of a Stravinsky ballet evening staged by the Opera and Ballet of the Slovenian National Theater in Ljubljana.

While Krečič was studying piano in Switzerland, he was trained in conducting by Dominique Roggen. At the time he conducted several Swiss orchestras. During the 2006/07 season he worked as a co-répétiteur at the Maribor Opera. Since March 2009 he has regularly performed as a guest conductor with the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra. Moreover, he performs in the same capacity with the RTV Slovenian Symphony Orchestra.

His performance credits also include cooperation with numerous prominent soloists from Slovenia and other countries. Here his support of contemporary music merits special mention. He has conducted numerous concerts at the Slovenian Slowind Festival and in Paris and Riga, premiered

various works by significant composers from Slovenia and other countries, and worked with leading soloists. In December 2013 he was appointed artistic director of the Maribor Opera, and in March 2019 the City of Maribor awarded him the Glazer Diploma for his achievements in the field of culture. His most recent productions include Jacques Offenbach's opera *Les contes d'Hoffmann* and Tchaikovsky's *Maid of Orleans* in Ljubljana, Puccini's *Turandot* in Rovigo and Ferrara, Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* in Trieste, and a ballet gala evening at the Teatro Massimo di Palermo. It is also most recently that he has conducted the Zagreb and Prague Philharmonic Orchestras.



Anamarija Knego, Filippo Polinelli, Giorgio Surian

Antonio Smareglia – Nozze Istriane

CD 1

ATTO PRIMO

La Scena

A Dignano: Un crocicchio di viuzze entro a case di modesta ma pittoresca apparenza; alcune con graziosissime finestre veneziane a trifoglio negli archi acuti, altre con cornicioni leggerissimi e mensoline snelle a sostegni. alcune con portichetto interno, altre con scaluzze di pietra all'esterno. Negli archi acuti delle porte e dei porticati immagini della Madonna con lampade e fiori e incorniciate da bizzarre intrecciature di spiche e fronde. A destra la casa di Menico, la quale occupa il primo piano della scena ed è casuccia spiccatamente dignanese con una piccola porta a gradini e col portichetto pel quale si, vede l'interno del cortile; dietro a questa altre case e viuzze. A sinistra la casa di Bara Giacomo e un'osteria con rozze panche ai lati della sua porta; ed altre case' aprentisi ad altre vie. Nel fondo un perdersi di case dietro alle quali Grigio il vecchio campanile della chiesa di Dignano.

SCENA PRIMA

Il cielo è nero, coperto da fosche nuvole; tuona e lampeggia. Uomini, donne, vecchi e fanciulli presi dal timore di una possibile grandinata stanno confusamente oile finestre, si affacciano alle porte e scendono giù nella

Antonio Smareglia – Istrian Wedding

CD 1

ACT I

The Stage Set

In Dignano: Narrow streets crisscross among houses of modest but picturesque appearance. Some houses have marvelous Venetian windows with trefoil in the pointed arches; others have simple cornices and trim corbels for support. Some have an interior portico; others have stone steps on the outside. In the pointed arches of the doors and the walkways there are images of the Madonna with lamps and flowers and with frames formed by elaborate intertwinings of ears of grain and leaves. On the right, Menico's house, which occupies the front of the stage. It is a humble residence of typical Dignano design with a little door and steps and with a little portico through which the interior of the courtyard is visible; behind this house there are other houses and narrow streets. On the left, Bara Giacomo's house and an osteria with rustic benches on both sides of its door. Other houses line other streets. In the back, a maze of houses behind which Grigio rises up, the old belltower of Dignano's church.

FIRST SCENE

The sky is black and covered with dark clouds; there is thunder and lightning. Men and women, old and young people, gripped with fear because a hailstorm may be coming, stand in confusion at the windows, appear at the doors, and go down to the street. Some old women are burning

strada; alcune vecchie bruciano rami di ulivo benedetto; donne, ritte sopra seggiole accendono i lumi, e le lampade delle Madonne. Tutto insieme è un gridio confuso misto a susurri di preghiera e ad esclamazioni di timore.

[1] PRELUDIO

[2] DONNE

O Biagio, protettore di Dignano!

UOMINI

Che tempo!
Vien dal mare!
Come tuona!

DONNE

O Biagio, o Biagio,
il Santo il più cristiano!

UOMINI

Vedi, s'annebbia il cielo!
L'aer rintrona!
Il turbine s'addensa ...
È un uragano!

DONNE

O Madonnina!
O tu pietosa e buona ...
Madre di dio, stendi su noi la mano!

UOMINI

Il turbine s'addensa!

blessed olive branches; women standing on chairs light the candles and lamps of the Madonnas. The entire scene conveys a picture of confused shouting mixed with whispered prayers and exclamations of horror.

[1] PRELUDE

[2] WOMEN

O Biagio, protector of Dignano!

MEN

What a storm!
It's coming from the sea!
How it's thundering!

WOMEN

O Biagio, O Biagio,
the most Christian saint!

MEN

Look, the sky is clouding over!
The sky is loudly resounding!
The whirlwind is thickening ...
It's a hurricane!

WOMEN

O Madonnina!
O you gracious and good ...
Mother of God, extend your hand over us!

MEN

The whirlwind is thickening!

DONNE

E il nonzolo che fa
che ancor non suona?!

*(Lampeggia, e tuona più forte – tutto ad
un tratto dal campanile prorompe uno
scampanellare rapido)*

DONNE *(ad intervalli)*

Maria e Giacobbe ed Agata e Lucia
Agnese, e tu, beata Caterina ...

UOMINI

Le lampade si spengono!
Che vento!

DONNE

Sant'Anna, tu, la madre di Maria
e nonna della maestà divina!

UOMINI

Lampeggi e tuoni
ma lontan la grandine!

DONNE

Chiara, Polonia,
Rosa, Anastasia, Barbara,
Dorotea, Flavia, Cristina ...

UOMINI

Par si rischiarì il ciel!
O nubi, andate alle terre
de' ricchi a grandinare!

(La scèna si rischiarà)

WOMEN

And the sacristan, what's he doing,
that he isn't sounding yet?!

*(There is thunder and lightning with greater force.
All of a sudden furious ringing is heard from the
belltower.)*

WOMEN *(at intervals)*

Maria and Giacobbe and Agata and Lucia,
Agnese and you, Blessed Caterina ...

MEN

The lamps are going out!
What a wind!

WOMEN

Sant'Anna, you, Mother of Mary
and grandmother of Divine Majesty!

MEN

Lightning flashes and thunderclaps,
but the hail in the distance!

WOMEN

Chiara, Polonia,
Rosa, Anastasia, Barbara,
Dorotea, Flavia, Cristina ...

MEN

The sky seems to be brightening!
O clouds, go to the lands of the rich
and send down your hailstones there!

(The stage brightens.)

DONNE

... se vi garba ascoltate
le parole nostre e l'affanno ...

*(Sulla scena, dalle nubi portate via dal vento,
libero erompe il sole e viene à piovere i suoi
raggi di luce)*

TUTTI *(con un grido di gioia)*

To'! Ritorna il sole!

*(In quella folla ritorna l'allegria e con essa un
chiaccherio rapido, garrulo, indifferente)*

DONNE *(chiamando gli uomini)*

Ora è di vespro!

UOMINI

Sì!

DONNE *(chiamando)*

Menina, andiam, suvvia!

UOMINI *(chiamando)*

O Florida, vien via!

RAGAZZE *(accorrendo)*

Veniamo! Eccoci qui!

Ora è di vespro!

(fra loro) Mi muto di gonnella!

Mi riliscio! Mi pettino!

Io chiamo mia sorella!

Vado e mi sbrigo!

Pettegole, è tardo!

(Mentr' entrano, separandosi, in diverse case)

WOMEN

... if it pleases you, do hear
our words and distress ...

*(On the stage, the sun emerges from the clouds
swept away by the wind and begins sending down
its rays of light.)*

ALL *(with a shout of joy)*

Look! The sun is coming back!

*(At this moment happiness returns and with it
rapid, garrulous, and unconcerned chatter.)*

WOMEN *(calling the men)*

It's time to go to vespers!

MEN

Yes!

WOMEN *(calling)*

Menina, let's go, hurry!

MEN *(calling)*

O Florida, get going!

GIRLS *(come running)*

We're coming! Here we are!

It's time to go to vespers!

(Among themselves) I'll change my skirt!

I'll freshen up! I'll comb my hair!

I'll call my sister!

I'll go, and I'll be quick!

Chatterboxes, it's getting late!

(While they separate and go into various houses:)

UOMINI

Ora è di vespro!
Pettegole, è tardo!

RAGAZZE

La gorgana mi metto!
Corro e mi sbrigo rapida!
Io cappa e fazzoletto!
Corro, no non mi al tardo!
Veniamo! Veniamo!

(con impazienza dalle porte e dalle finestre)

UOMINI

Ora è di vespro!
O pettegole. È tardo!

(Le ragazze rientrano e sulla scena rimangono sólo alcuni giovani all'osteria)

SCENA SECONDA

Biagio se ne viene da una viuzza di sinistra parlando animatamente con Nicola, bel giovanotto, e, benché vestito alla moda dignaese, pur tuttavia non senza una certa ricercatezza. Biagio invece è uno strano vecchio d'un parlare e d'una comicità bizzarra. Nicola si stacca da Biagio e va a sedere avanti all'osteria con altri giovani. Biagio va sotto alle finestre della casa di Menico.

[3] BIAGIO (*chiamando*)
Padron mio bello e caro!
Dico, Menico!

MEN

It's time to go to vespers!
Chatterboxes, it's getting late!

GIRLS

I'll put on my dress!
I'll run, and I'll be quick!
The cape and the scarf!
I'll run; I won't be late!
Let's get going! Let's get going!

(With impatience from the doors and the windows:)

MEN

It's time to go to vespers!
O chatterboxes, it's getting late!

(The girls go back into the houses, and only some boys at the osteria remain on the stage.)

SECOND SCENE

Biagio comes from a narrow street on the left, excitedly talking to Nicola, a fine young man. Although he is dressed Dignano style, he nevertheless is not without a certain affected elegance. By contrast, Biagio is a peculiar old man with a bizarre manner of speaking and a comic aspect. Nicola separates from Biagio and goes to sit outside the osteria with other youths. Biagio goes under the windows of Menico's house.

[3] BIAGIO (*calling*)
My fine dear master!
I say, Menico!

MENICO (*apparendo alla finestra ancora in maniche di camicia; brontolone*)
Non son sordo!
(*Vedendo Biagio si accieta*)
Biagio, mi vesto e vengo.
(*Rientra*)

BIAGIO (*verso la finestra*)
Fate il comodo vostro, fate!
(*Si avvicina ai giovanotti*)
Be', giovanotti a' vespri non andate?

GIOVANOTTI
Qui ci sostiamo ad aspettare
le ragazze che devono passare
e un gotto ne beviamo.
Se ne beve un bicchiere
e le stiamo a guardare;
così doppio piacere,
è bere ed ammirare.

BIAGIO (*seduto fra loro – ma rivolgendo il discorso soprattutto a Nicola*)
Passa una bella baldanzosa ...
passa desiderosa di farsi rimirare;
voi la state a guardare e a riguardare
lungo tutta la via finché è sparita via ...
Fuorché una volta, la bella vezzosa
tenuto ha gli occhi al suolo,
pure la maliziosa!
v'ha presi tutti con un guardo solo!

(*Nicola vorrebbe rispondere, ma dalle diverse case escono le ragazze ed egli le guarda attentamente per vedervene una ..., che ancora non è uscita, e la voglia di rispondere a Biagio*

MENICO (*appearing at the window, still in shirtsleeves, grumbling*)
I'm not deaf!
(*Seeing Biagio, he calms down.*)
Biagio, I'll get dressed and come.
(*He goes back in.*)

BIAGIO (*toward the window*)
Do as you please, as you please!
(*He approaches the youths.*)
Well, my young sirs, you're not going to vespers?

YOUTHS
We're staying here to wait for the girls
who should be coming by
and to drink a drop.
Drinking a glass
and looking at them
means having the double pleasure
of a drink and a feast for the eyes.

BIAGIO (*seated among them – but directing his words above all to Nicola*)
When a pretty flirt of a girl passes by ...
her desire in so doing is to win admiration; you look
at her, and you look at her some more along the
entire street until she disappears from view ...
Unless it happens that the pretty thing
has been looking down at the ground –
the naughty miss!
She's captured all of you with a single glance!

(*Nicola would like to respond, but the girls come out of the various houses, and he looks at them attentively to see one of them ... who hasn't come out yet, and his desire to respond to Biagio fades.*

gli passa. – Portano le ragazze dignanesi certe cappe sul capo che le farebbero rasso miglia-re'a monache, se non lasciassero scorgere i grossi orecchini fatti a mezzaluna coi tre piroli d'oro, e le collane e i concieri del capo)

GIOVANOTTI

Eccole! Belle! Care!

Sì, carine!

Che visi delicati!

Ah, che donnine!

(Dalla casa di Menico esce'una fanciulla. – Le amiche la attorniano)

GIOVANOTTI

Ecco Marussa, la figlia di Menico!

RAGAZZE

O Marussa, venite?

MARUSSA

Eccomi! Vengo!

Ora avverto mio padre

e son con voi.

(dal limitare della porta di casa)

O mio sor padre, me ne vado in

chiesa e lascio aperto l'uscio!

(alle ragazze) Andiam?

RAGAZZE

Andiamo!

(si allontanano e se ne escono a sinistra)

NICOLA *(che non, ha mai potuto staccare gli occhi da Marussa, perdutala di vista sa rivolge a Biagio con una certa vivacità:)*

The Dignano girls are wearing head coverings that would give them the appearance of nuns if they did not show large earrings of half-moon shape with three pearls of gold and the necklaces and the head coverings.)

YOUTHS

Here they are! – Beauties! – Dears!

Yes, little dears!

What dainty faces!

Ah, what little ladies!

(A girl comes out of Menico's house. Her female friends form a circle around her.)

YOUTHS

It's Marussa, Menico's daughter!

GIRLS

O Marussa, are you coming?

MARUSSA

Here I am! I'm coming!

I'll tell my father

and be right with you.

(From the threshold of the door into the house)

O my father sir, I'm going to church,

and I'll leave the door unlocked!

(To the girls) Shall we go?

GIRLS

We'll go!

(They go on their way and exit on the left.)

NICOLA *(who has not been able to get his eyes off Marussa, but when he loses sight of her, he turns to Biagio with a certain vivacity:)*

Che una bella passando per via
il cuore porta via ...
che nel guardarci una sol volta
sa tutto di noi, è vero ... è verità!
Però soggiungere dovete
che quello sguardo suo
deve partire da cert'occhio ...
sapete ... che guardar sappia
e sappia far morire ...
Or occhio tal sta sovra
un viso solo!
(Biagio beve a sogghigna)

GIOVANOTTI *(a Nicola)*
E v'ha guardato?

NICOLA *(crollando mesto il capo)*
Esso m'avrebbe ucciso!

GIOVANOTTI *(vuotando i bicchieri e
pagando il bevuta all'oste)*
A' vespri! A' vespri!
Là le belle e le brutte
tutte ci sono, tutte;
e stanno ad aspettare.
una che è bella sembra in pregar raccolta
ma pure, qualche volta, la si volge a
guardare ...

*(Si allontanano lasciando solo Biagio, col suo
bicchiere semivuoto)*

A beautiful girl goes down the street
and takes a fellow's heart away with her ...
She looks at us just once and knows
everything about us, it's true, it's the truth!
But you ought to add
that that glance of hers
must come from a good eye...
know ... that she knows how to look
and that she knows how to kill ...
Now such an eye takes aim
at one face alone!
(Biagio drinks with a grin.)

YOUTHS *(to Nicola)*
And did she look at you?

NICOLA *(sadly shaking his head)*
It would have killed me!

YOUTHS *(emptying their glasses and paying the
innkeeper)*
To vespers! To vespers!
The pretty girls and the ugly ones,
they're all there, all of them;
and they're waiting.
A pretty one seems to be absorbed in prayer,
but it's true, sometimes, she starts
looking around ...

*(They go away, leaving Biagio alone, with his
half-empty glass.)*

SCENA TERZA

Esce Menico, uomo di faccia sempre
corrucciata, burbero, brontolone.

[4] MENICO (*a Biagio*)

Se perdo i vespri
a starti ad ascoltare, o Biagio ...

BIAGIO

Hovvi a proporre un grosso affare
di terre e di denari ...
il più grosso, vi dico, degli affari.

MENICO (*sedendo*)

Sbrighi in due parole!

BIAGIO

In due parole sole.
(*con mistero*)
Ho un marito ricco e buono,
bello e ricco (se il volete)
per Marussa.
E ... non credete!
ricco, dico,
e non canzono!
Se vi dico: »Ricco assai!«,
dico vigne e zecchin d'or!
Il denaro sempre mai
fu de' generi il miglior.
Se vi taccio il nome pria
gli è che voglio ed ora e qui
mi diciate tosto un »si!«
e ... affar fatto e così sia!

MENICO (*sta pensieroso, si 'gratta il capo -
poi, crollandolo, risponde:*)
Dal nulla son venuto

THIRD SCENE

Menico, a man of sad countenance, comes out, a
gruff type, a grumbler.

[4] MENICO (*to Biagio*)

If I'm missing vespers
to listen to you, O Biagio ...

BIAGIO

I have a splendid business deal
involving lands and money to propose to you ...
the biggest, I tell you, of deals.

MENICO (*sitting down*)

Get it out in two words!

BIAGIO

In a mere two words.
(*With mystery*)
I have a rich and good husband,
handsome and rich (if you want)
for Marussa.
And ... you won't believe it!
rich, I say,
and I'm not pulling your leg!
If I say to you: "Extremely rich!"
I mean vineyards and gold coins!
Money has always been
the best of sons-in-law.
If I don't tell you his name just yet,
it's because I want you here and now
to give me an immediate "yes!"
and ... the matter will be settled!

MENICO (*thinking things over, scratching his head -
then shaking his head, responds:*)
I started out with nothing

e ho un po' di ben di dio
perché ho vissuto
ben magramente, ond'io
penso che è meglio che
la roba mia Menisco se la goda
e non mi fugga via o non la roda
un che mi piglia
in un sol colpo e la roba e la figlia.

BIAGIO (*insinuante*)
È ricco! È innamorato!
Or combinare si può!
Non vi propongo che un affare!

MENICO (*un po' stizzito*)
No! Quando proponeste
prestiti ... operazioni ...
con slancio mi vedeste
cogliere le occasioni
e darvi anche il percento
che vi toccava, onde ...
quindi ... però ...
lo non ci sento
e vi rispondo: no!
(*Biagio si leva e passeggia comicamente
concitato.*)
Fra poco esce la gente.
Ho un tale contadino
che deve e non dà niente.
Vo a mettermi in agguato ...
e pago il vino!
(*Paga il vino*)

BIAGIO
Ah, più che non si dice la fortuna
è una gran meretricече

and have God's little pittance
because I've lived
very modestly, which is why
I think that it's better for Menico
to enjoy what belongs to him
and not let it get away or have it get into the hands
of a fellow who in one fell swoop
takes my goods and my daughter.

BIAGIO (*suggestively*)
He's rich! He's in love!
We can settle it now!
I'm offering you a deal, nothing more!

MENICO (*somewhat irritated*)
No! When you've proposed
loans ... operations ...
looked at me so intently,
your purpose was to seize the opportunity
and to get the percentage
coming to you, whence ...
therefore ... to put it plainly ...
I'm not going in on it,
and my answer is "no!"
(*Biagio gets up and paces with
comic excitement.*)
In a little while people will be coming out.
I have a peasant
who's in debt and doesn't pay up.
I'm going to wait for him ...
and I'll pay for the wine!
(*He pays for the wine.*)

BIAGIO
Ah, it isn't without reason
that Fortune is called a big whore

tresca giorno e notte
con chi le dà sol botte!
(Vedendo Menico che fa per allontanarsi, lo trattiene)

Ancora una parola!
(con aria di mistero abbassando la voce)

Era il figlio di Placido ... Nicola!
(Menico rimane, un po' sorpreso, poi fa l'atto ancora di allontanarsi – ma Biagio lo trattiene per l'abito)

Ed un'altra ne dico ... in amicizia.
Badate a vostra figlia!

È età propizia!

Capite? ... Non è raro
che sprezzando un cavallo
un padre avaro abbia a pigliarsi
a genero un somaro.

MENICO *(scosso alle parole di Biagio per quanto non vi presti fede, rimane un po' pensieroso)*

Le tue parole
son ferri del mestiere!

(Fa per avviarsi, poi ritorna ancora)
Però ... (a farti piacere) di' a Nicola ...
(se vuole)

che corteggiar Marussa gli permetto.

BIAGIO *(rabbonito)*

Or siete un uomo!

MENICO

Però. ...

patti chiari!

Il marito in casa mia!

(E si allontana guardingo verso il fondo scoprendo dentro a una viuzza)

who intrigues day and night
with those at odds with her!
(Seeing that Menico is going away, he holds him back.)

One more word!
(Lowering his voice, with an air of mystery)

He's Placido's son ... Nicola!
(Menico stops, a little surprised, but he again starts going away – but Biagio holds him back by his clothing.)

And I'll tell you something else ... out of friendship.
Watch out for your daughter!

She's at just the right age!

Do you understand? ... It isn't uncommon
that by rejecting a horse
a greedy father has to take
a donkey for a son-in-law.

MENICO *(shocked by Biagio's words while entertaining his doubts, remains a little thoughtful)*

Your words
are the work of a master craftsman!

(He starts going away but then returns.)
However ... (to please you), tell Nicola ...
(if he wants)

that I give him my permission to court Marussa.

BIAGIO *(appeased)*

Now you're a man!

MENICO

However ...

clear rules!

The husband in my house!

(He cautiously goes toward the back of the stage, disappearing into a narrow street.)

BIAGIO

Così ... di dote ... niente!

Oh, vecchia arpia!

(riflette, poi crolla il capo)

Purché l'affar si faccia

e io pigli il mio!

Or ... da Nicola!

E al resto pensi iddio!

SCENA QUARTA

Vengono a gruppi le persone, i maschi coi maschi e le femmine colle femmine; uomini, fanciulli e vecchi, donne, bambine e ragazze; vengono dalla viuzza di sinistra e tornano dalla chiesa. Gli uomini hanno il coretto, stille spalle (giacca senza saccoccie), i larghi cappelli ad a la piatta e le scarpe di pelle gialla.

[5] ALCUNI GIOVANOTTI *(indicando ad altri la casa di bara Giacomo)*

A nozze v'ha invitati
bara Giacomo?

ALTRI *(rispondono)*

Che sì, ma non ci andiamo.

ALCUNI GIOVANOTTI *(camminando dietro ad un gruppo di ragazze)*

Non vuol guardare!

ALTRI *(ridendo)*

Finge!

RAGAZZE *(ai giovanotti)*

Guardar così, vi ho detto, non mi piace!
(passano oltre)

BIAGIO

Just like that ... about the dowry ... nothing!

Oh, miserly old age!

(He reflects but then shakes his head.)

Just as long as the deal is closed

and I get my percentage!

Now ... to Nicola!

And let heaven see to the rest!

FOURTH SCENE

Persons come in groups, the males with males and the females with females; adult men, boys, and elderly men, ladies, baby girls, and young girls. They are coming from the narrow street on the left and returning from the church. The men are wearing the coretto, a leather breastplate, over their shoulders (a jacket without pockets), broad-brimmed hats with a flat rim, and shoes of yellow leather.

[5] SOME YOUTHS *(indicating the house of Bara Giacomo to the others)*

Has Bara Giacomo invited you
to the wedding?

OTHERS *(responding)*

Yes, but we're not going.

SOME YOUTHS *(walking behind a group of girls)*

No harm in looking!

OTHERS *(laughing)*

Just don't be too obvious!

GIRLS *(to the youths)*

Looking like that; I've told you, I don't like it!
(They go on ahead.)

UOMINI (*gente bonacciona e sempre pronta a creder bene*)

C'è da sperar che avremo
buona annata.

ALTRI (*gente sempre di malumore e sempre insoddisfatta*)

Tropp'uva fu
la scorsa vendemmia!

(Biagio mentre fa per avviarsi alla ricerca di Nicola, se lo vede venire in compagnia di altri giovanotti; gli fa cenno, e lo trae in disparte verso l'osteria parlandogli con molta animazione; Nicola accenna col capo che egli bene comprende.)

NICOLA (*con slancio*)

Grazie! E sentite!

La mia famiglia contro le usanze
giammai non va.

Però Nicola per la sua figlia
anche le usanze calpesterà.

Ah, per Marussa tutto, direte,
saprò affrontare,
sfidar saprò.

Vuole l'ingiusto!

Ma a dir gli avete
che per Marussa tutto farò!

E se dovessi coi miei fratelli
smezzar la casa ...

si smezzerà!

E i campi! E tutto!
per gli occhi belli di lei!

BIAGIO (*interrompendolo*)

Nicola, questo si sa!

MEN (*good-humored people who are always ready to think positively*)

There's hope that we'll have
a good harvest.

OTHERS (*people who are always in a bad mood and always unsatisfied*)

The last wine harvest
yielded too many grapes!

(While Biagio is getting ready to go looking for Nicola, the same is seen coming in the company of other youths. Biagio makes a sign to him and takes him off toward the osteria, speaking to him with great animation. Nicola nods his head, indicating that he understands his message.)

NICOLA (*vigorously*)

Thank you! And listen!

My family never goes
against custom.

But Nicola will even trample
custom for his daughter.

Ah, for Marussa, everything, I tell you;
I'll know how to confront,

I'll know how to defy –
let injustice be done!

But you've got to tell him
that I'll do everything for Marussa!

Even if I have to divide the house
with my brothers ...

it'll be divided!

And the fields! And everything!
for her beautiful eyes!

BIAGIO (*interrupting him*)

Nicola, that we know!

(e prendendolo pel braccio si avvia per una viuzza di destra)

(Ed ecco sbucare, di dovè si era nascosto! Menico e farsi bruscamente incontro ad un contadino che sospinge frettoloso il suo asinello animando colle grida di: Vàri! Vàri! ... e gli afferra'la briglia per trattenerlo. I due gestiscono con grande vivacità, ma ad un tratto, nella discussione, colto il destro, il contadino spinge improvvisamente l'asino che si dà a trotterellar via, per poco non rovesciando Menico)

MENICO *(se ne viene verso casa ove entra urlando furibondo:)*

Ah, canaglia! O malpaga!

Ah, giuntatore! Ma te la fo ...

Vo tosto dal cursore!

SCENA QUINTA

Ne la gente che passa e attraversa il fondo della scena, appare una fanciulla slava. E' certa Luze dei dintorni di Peroi, piccolo villaggio presso a Dignano, abitato da una colonia di Montenegri che fuggiti dalle montagne loro ivi si sono rifugiati tra il mare ed il Prostimino (luogo triste e incultivabile, ove non vegetano che fragole selvatiche, ginepro, timo ed eriche) e, formando sempre fra gente dei loro i maritaggi, si sonofino ai nostri di propagati puri e nel sangue e nel rito della loro religione. Passa fra al gente la giovane ed offre mazzolinidi fragole selvatiche; ne offre a tutti ed anche a Biagio che se ne ritorna di dove ha accompagnato Nicola per avviarsi alla casa di bara Giacomo.

(Taking him by the arm, he exits on a narrow street on the right.)

(Behold: Menico comes out of his hiding place and goes with brisk steps toward a peasant who is furiously driving his donkey, urging it on with shouts of "Vàri! Vàri!" ... and he grabs the bridle to make it stop. The two gesticulate with great vivacity, but all of a sudden, during the discussion, seizing the opportunity, the peasant quickly drives his donkey away, and it goes trotting, almost knocking Menico over.)

MENICO *(he goes toward the house and enters, furiously howling:)*

Ah, you lout! Ah, you scoundrel!

Ah, schemer! But I'll get you ...

I'll go to the bailiff at once!

FIFTH SCENE

A Slav girl appears among the people who are passing by and crossing the back of the stage. She is a certain Luze from the environs of Peroi, a little village near Dignano inhabited by a colony of Montenegrins who have fled from their mountains and have found refuge there between the sea and Prostimino (a sad and uncultivable place where all that grows are wild strawberries, juniper, thyme, and heather). Since they always seal marriages among their own people, they have maintained a pure line of descent until our own days, both in blood and in the rite of their religion. The young girl goes among the people and offers bunches of wild strawberries. She offers them to everybody, including Biagio, who is returning from where he accompanied Nicola to go on the way to Bara Giacomo's house.

[6] BIAGIO (*tuffa le mani nel piccolo cesto di Luze*)

Ah, acerbe e fracide!
Tanto varrebbe vendere
per insalata
l'eriche del Prostimò!

(*Getta i mazzolini nel cesto con disprezzo ed entra nella casa di Giacomo*)
(*Luze paziente e rassegnata, riordina nel cesto le fragole*)
(*Esce Menico di casa chiudendo forte l'uscio e guarda intorno per vedere se Marussa fosse tornata o per ritornare; Luze gli si avvicina e gli offre le sue fragole*)

MENICO

No! Vanne al diavolo!

(*Vede in quella Marussa e bruscamente le dà la chiave e si allontana*)

SCENA SESTA

Le amiche di Marussa rincasano.
Marussa fa per aprire.

[7] LUZE (*a Marussa*)

Tu che sì buona appari e sei
sì bella, deh, compera
le fragole di Luze!
Le ho colte laggiù al Prostimò
nella gran pace del silenzio
cupò e desolato come l'alma mia.

[6] BIAGIO (*puts his hands in Luze's little basket*)

Ah, bitter and rotten!
This is like selling
the heathers of Prostimò
for mixed greens!

(*He disdainfully throws the bunches into the basket and goes into Giacomo's house.*)
(*Luze, patient and resigned, reorders the strawberries in the basket.*)
(*Menico comes out of the house, loudly slams the door, and looks around to see if Marussa has returned or is returning. Luze goes up to him and offers him her strawberries.*)

MENICO

No! Go the devil!

(*At this very moment he sees Marussa and quickly gives her the key and goes away.*)

SIXTH SCENE

Marussa's female friends go into their houses.
Marussa goes to open the door.

[7] LUZE (*to Marussa*)

You who appear to be so good
and are so pretty, please, buy
Luze's strawberries!
I picked them down there in Prostimò
in the big peace of the silence
as dark and desolate as my soul.

MARUSSA (*sorpresa alla dolcezza e anche alla tristezza del dire della fanciulla*)
Hai gli occhi gravi per le lagrime
e nel tuo bianco viso
v'ha una pietà che accora.

LUZE

Un giorno, sì, era bello il viso mio ...
Sì, quasi come te ero bella anch'io!
Ma la bellezza mia l'hanno vizza le lagrime.

MARUSSA (*ravvisandola*)

Or di te mi sovviene!
T'ho un dì di festa
alla chiesa veduta;
eri sola e seduta
e avevi in grembo un bimbo
che accarezzavi e che baciavi forte ...
Parevi una madonna!
Io ti ricordo ancora.

LUZE (*con grande angoscia*)

Il mio bimbo è malato,
e come allora ancora sono sola!

MARUSSA (*commossa*)

Non hai padre?

LUZE

Mio padre m'ha cacciata!
(*con tristezza e dolcissimo abbandono*)
Luze un amante aveva
Che tutta la sua vita render lieta doveva;
io gli volevo bene ed ei me ne voleva tanto
come si conviene ad uno
innamorato ardentemente amato.
Di noi più forte, amore

MARUSSA (*surprised by the girl's sweetness as well as by the sadness of her words*)
You have eyes made heavy by tears,
and in your white face
there's a goodness that touches the heart.

LUZE

Once, yes, my face was pretty ...
Yes, I too was almost as pretty as you!
But now tears have spoiled my beauty.

MARUSSA (*recognizing her*)

But now I remember you!
I saw you in the church
on a feast day;
you were alone and sitting there,
and you had a child on your lap
and were caressing him and ardently kissing him ...
You looked like a Madonna!
Now I remember you.

LUZE (*with great anxiety*)

My child is sick,
and just as then, so too now: I'm alone!

MARUSSA (*moved*)

You don't have a father?

LUZE

My father threw me out!
(*With sad and very sweet forlornness*)
Luze had a lover
who was to make happy all her life.
I loved him well, and he loved me as much
as a fellow in love should
when he's passionately in love.
Stronger than us, love

ci colse al dolce inganno!
Ah, quelle rapide ore
m'han dato eterno affanno!
Il morbo in brevi dì
il mio amante rapì;
il padre m'ha cacciata;
e così dal peccato
di donna desolata
il mio bambino è nato,
mio gioia e mio dolor,
mio orgoglio e mio rossore
mio orgoglio e mio rossore!
*(Porta la mano, agli occhi e rimane muta,
addolorata)*

MARUSSA

Vedi? ... M'hai fatto pianger!

*(e rapidamente levato di tasca il borsino lo
vuota nel cesto delle fragole di Luze e fa per
avviarsi alla casa)*

LUZE

L'elemosina, no!
Non importuna Luze alle porte!
Luze coglie fragole in primavera
al Prostimò e le vende!
*(Marussa sorpresa guarda Luze, poscia ritor-
na a lei sceglie alcuni mazzodini di fragole e
se li pone nel grembiale, e sai allontana)*

*(compresa dalla pietà di Marussa, le corre
appresso e le bacia la mano)*
La tua pietà – Luze ricorderà!

led us to sweet deception!
Ah, those brief hours
have given me endless affliction!
In a few days an illness
snatched away my lover;
my father threw me out;
and so from the sin
of a desolate girl
my child was born,
my joy and my grief,
my pride and my shame,
my pride and my shame!
*(She puts her hand to her eyes and remains silent,
overcome with grief.)*

MARUSSA

Do you see? ... You've made me cry!

*(She quickly takes her coin purse from her pocket,
empties it into Luze's strawberry basket, and turns
to go into the house.)*

LUZE

Alms, no!
Luze doesn't beg from door to door!
Luze picks strawberries in the spring
in Prostimò and sells them!
*(Marussa looks at Luze in surprise and then goes
back to her, selects some of her bundles of straw-
berries, puts them in her smock, and goes away.)*

*(Moved by Marussa's kindness, Luze runs after her
and kisses her hand.)*
Your kindness – Luze shall remember it!

(Biagio che col violino, uscendo dalla casa di bara Giacomo ha assistito a quella scena, rimane sorpreso)

MARUSSA

Sì, Luze, ti ricorda di Marussa!
Vedi? Sto qui!

LUZE

Ti porterò dei fiori!
(ed esce)

BIAGIO *(si avvicina a Marussa che sta per aprire l'uscio di casa e mostrandole il violino)*

Vado, Marussa,
a prendere una sposa.
E quando a voi?

MARUSSA

Lontano è ancor quel giorno!

BIAGIO *(malizioso)*

No! presto!

MARUSSA *(entra subito in casa troncando il discorso)*

Buona sera!

BIAGIO *(sorpreso)*

Buona sera!
(ed esce)

(Biagio with his violin, going out of Bara Giacomo's house, has witnessed the previous scene, and stops in surprise.)

MARUSSA

Yes, Luze, you'll remember Marussa!
Do you see? I'm here!

LUZE

I'll bring you flowers!
(She exits.)

BIAGIO *(approaches Marussa, who is about to open the door into the house, and shows her the violin)*

Marussa, I'm going
to take a wife.
And when are you getting a husband?

MARUSSA

That day is still far away!

BIAGIO *(maliciously)*

No! Soon!

MARUSSA *(immediately enters the house, breaking off the conversation)*

Good evening!

BIAGIO *(surprised)*

Good evening!
(He exits.)

SCENA SETTIMA

Intanto si fa sera – passano ancora alcuni contadini – alcune donne scendono ed accendono le lampade alle Madonne e rincasano chiudendo gli usci.

8 LORENZO (*si avvicina cantando*)

Sebben io passi
pur non ti saluto;
faccio per non dar
scandali alla gente;
così sa un uom
esser discreto e muto
e far li fatti suoi segretamente.

(Marussa accorre alla finestra e ne rinchiede le gelosie e intanto scambia con Lorenzo un rapido sguardo mentre Lorenzo si allontana per il fondo continuando il suo canto).

Segretamente sonmi innamorato;
segretamente dunque fo all'amor;
segretamente il core m'hai rubato;
segretamente m'hai rubato il cor!
Sebben io pass.

(Marussa scende nel cortiletto per la porta interna, dove, venendo dalla viuzza laterale alla casa di Menico, quasi subito si introduce pure Lorenzo)

SCENA OTTAVA

9 LORENZO

Ho tuo padre incontrato
che correva,

SEVENTH SCENE

Meanwhile, night is falling. Some people are still going by with little torches while some women are going down, lighting the lamps of the Madonnas, and then going back into their houses and closing the doors.

8 LORENZO (*comes singing*)

Although I pass by,
I don't greet you;
I do it so as not
to cause people scandals;
so a man is able
to be discreet and silent
and to do his work in secret.

(Marussa runs to the window and closes the shutters while exchanging a quick glance with Lorenzo while he goes away to the back of the stage and continues his song.)

I'm secretly in love;
secretly I do love's bidding;
secretly you've robbed my heart;
secretly you've robbed my heart!
Although I pass by.

(Marussa goes down to the little courtyard through the inner door, where, coming from the narrow little street on the side of Menico's house, Lorenzo introduces himself as if all of a sudden.)

EIGHTH SCENE

9 LORENZO

I met your father;
he was running,

onde più presto dell'usato
qui mi sono affrettato.
Io ti sapeva
in casa tutta sola
onde il desio d'udir la tua parola
m'ha messo l'ali e son volato.

MARUSSA

Lorenzo, troppo presto
venite questa sera.
È dì di festa ed è di nozze giorno;
tardi sta intorno
e non rincasa che alla notte tarda
la gente che ode e guarda.

LORENZO

Marussa bella, mi vuoi far morire!
Un'ora di ansie è tutta una stagione, è un anno
per me di cruccio e affanno,
ché mi divora la passione pe' tuoi begli occhi,
e si sa, la prudenza non può farla
tenere all'impazienza del mio destino
che t'ha fatta venir sul mio cammino!

MARUSSA

Lo so, lo so, amor mio;
ma pure ancora,
Lorenzo, all'ora
de' nostri affanni non dà fine Iddio.
Per Marussa, ti prego,
abbi pazienza!
Non conosci mio padre ...
Usiam prudenza!

LORENZO

Io mi consumo intanto!
Ve' come son disfatto

so that sooner than usual,
I've hurried here.
I knew
that you were all alone at home,
so that the desire to hear your words
gave me wings, and I've come flying here.

MARUSSA

Lorenzo, you've come
all too soon this evening.
It's a feast day and a wedding day;
people will be out late around here
and won't go back home until late at night,
people who have ears and eyes.

LORENZO

Beautiful Marussa, you'll be my death yet!
An hour of anxieties is a whole season; for
me it's a year of agony and affliction because
people for your beautiful eyes devours me,
and it's known that prudence can't contain
the impatience of my fate,
which made you come my way.

MARUSSA

I know, I know, my love,
but God isn't ready just yet,
Lorenzo, to grant an end
to the term of our afflictions.
For Marussa, I beg you,
be patient!
You don't know my father ...
Let's exercise prudence!

LORENZO

Meanwhile I'm being consumed!
See how I'm undone

e come son stremato!
Ah, Lorenzo è ammalato!
Da te venne l'incanto!
O Marussa, che hai fatto?
Ero sì lieto pria!
ero sano e rubesto ...
ed or son triste e mesto,
se ne è ita l'allegria!
Senti! Questa tortura,
credi, non può durare
né per me, né per te!
Se è un mal che non ha cura,
lasciarci martoriare
così a lungo, perché?

MARUSSA

Io pur, Lorenzo, vedi,
penso solo al tuo amore
e vivo sempre, credi,
nell'ansia e nel dolore!
Se mio padre mi chiama
il cuor batte forte!
Penso m'abbia a parlare
del nostro amore
e dal terrore tremo!
Pur la mia sorte sopporto
nel pensiero di te,
del nostro amore e ...
t'amo ... e spero!

LORENZO

Mia povera fanciulla,
è vero... è vero!
Pur se sapessi quale pena
nasconde l'amor
quando è sì forte!

and how I'm frail!
Ah, Lorenzo, is ill!
The spell came from you!
O Marussa, what have you done?
I was once so happy!
I was healthy and ruddy ...
and now I'm sad and gloomy,
and happiness is gone!
Listen! This torture,
do believe, can't go on,
not for me, not for you!
It's an illness that doesn't have a cure;
to make us suffer
so long, why?

MARUSSA

But I, Lorenzo, look,
I think alone of your love,
and I live always, do believe,
in anxiety and in pain!
If my father calls me,
my heart beats wildly!
I think that he wants to talk to me
about our love,
and I tremble with fear!
But I endure my fate
in contemplation of you,
of our love and ...
I love you ... and I hope!

LORENZO

My poor girl,
it's true ... it's true!
But if you knew
what pain love conceals
when it's so strong!

MARUSSA

Vengo alla chiesa perché ci sei;
ma se voglio pregar? Ti sento!
Se voglio a dio pensar?
Ti guardo!
E allor mi vince il pentimento,
ed ecco tosto che al tuo sguardo
corrono ansiosi gli occhi mie!
Chino gli occhi sul libro
e prego e credo
seguir la messa finalmente ...
Infatti io movo il labbro
come quando si prega ...
E ancor ti vedo sul libro mio,
nella mia mente e ...
peggio ancor!
prego il tuo nome!
(con immenso affetto)
Se ami Marussa
sii paziente ancora!

LORENZO

Io credo alla sventura
e temo sempre!

MARUSSA *(accorata)*

Ah, mi fai torto!
*(e levandosi un piccolo cuoricino d'oro che le
donne dignanesi sogliono tenere al collo lo
porge a Lorenzo)*
Prendi! È di mia madre!
Vi sono dentro
i suoi e miei capelli!
(col'accento solenne di un giuramento)
Con questo dono
la mia vita dono a te, Lorenzo!
E giuro!

MARUSSA

I go to church because you're there;
but if I want to pray? I hear you!
If I want to think of God?
I see you!
And then remorse comes over me,
but next my eyes anxiously run
in search of your glance!
I incline my eyes to the book,
and I pray and I believe
that at last I'm following the mass ...
In fact I move my lips
as when one prays ...
And yet I see you in my book,
in my mind, and ...
worse yet!
I pray your name!
(With immense emotion)
If you love Marussa,
do yet be patient!

LORENZO

I believe in misfortune
and always live in fear!

MARUSSA *(blushing)*

Ah, you do me wrong!
*(Taking a little heart of gold that Dignano women
are accustomed to wear on the neck, she gives it
to Lorenzo.)*
Take it! It's my mother's!
Her hair is in it
and so is mine!
(In the solemn tone of a vow)
With this gift
I give you my life, Lorenzo!
And I swear!

LORENZO
O cara bocca!

MARUSSA
E invoco iddio ...

LORENZO
Bocca adorata e santa!

MARUSSA
... san Biagio, e la Madonna
e tutti gli angioli ...
... e i due santi
che posano all'altare!

LORENZO
Sì, benedetta sia quella tua bocca
e contraccambio il dono
e il giuramento!

*(si leva l'orecchino che i dignanesi portano ad
un solo orecchio e lo dà a Marussa e ne riceve
il cuoricino)*

MARUSSA
Con questo dono a te dono
la mia rita a te Lorenzo!
Ne inizia ritornato questo dono!

LORENZO
E duri sempre
e il dono e il giuramento!

*(E' completamente scesa la sera. Da lungi
ne viene avvicinandosi un suono allegro di
villotta)*

LORENZO
O dear mouth!

MARUSSA
And I invoke God ...

LORENZO
Mouth, adored and holy!

MARUSSA
... San Biagio and the Madonna
and all the angels ...
... and the two saints
who stand on the altar!

LORENZO
Yes, blessed be your mouth,
and I have something in exchange
for the gift and the vow!

*(He takes the earring that Dignano men wear
on one ear, gives it to Marussa, and receives the
little heart.)*

MARUSSA
With this gift
I give my life to you, Lorenzo!
It begins with this exchange!

LORENZO
And may they forever endure,
both the gift and the vow!

*(Night has completely fallen. From afar the happy
sound of the villotta is heard approaching.)*

10 MARUSSA

È Menina che sposa!
(trascina in fondo al cortiletto Lorenzo)

LORENZO

Anche per noi,
Marussa, verrà il dì della villotta!
*(e rimangono l'uno presso all'altra nella densa
oscurità del piccolo cortile)*

SCENA NONA

Sbocca dal fondo il corteo che conduce la sposa Menina, in casa del marito, il figlio di Bara Giacomo. Il corteo è preceduto da un vecchio con un fanalino acceso fra le mani. Alcuni portano fiaccolle. Vi è Biagio che strimpella il suo violino. La sposa è tutta commossa per l'abbandono della casa, e vorrebbe però nascondere la sua commozione, ma, come è usanza dei dignanesi, gli invitati intorno, le fanno gazzarra gridando per farla piangere:

CORO

La piange! La piange!
Di casa muta la fanciulla bella!
La piange! La piange!
Di casa mia la fanciulla
La piange! La piange!
Amor t'aspetta nella nuova casa!
Dentro la nova casa aspetta amor!
La piange! La piange!
Già pronto presso il letto
sta una culla!
La piange! La piange!

10 MARUSSA

It's Menina who's getting married!
*(She takes Lorenzo to the back of the little
courtyard.)*

LORENZO

For us too,
Marussa, the day of the villotta will come!
*(They remain, the one pressed against the other,
in the thick darkness of the little courtyard.)*

NINTH SCENE

The procession conducting the bride Menina to the house of her husband, the son of Bara Giacomo, comes out of the back. An old man holding a lit lamp in his hands leads the procession. Some people are carrying little torches. Biagio is seen bowing a tune on his violin. The bride is so very moved to be leaving home and would like to hide her emotion, but, as is the custom of the people of Dignano, the guests around her create a commotion and shout to make her weep.

CHORUS

She's crying! She's crying!
The pretty girl is leaving home!
She's crying! She's crying!
From my home, the girl,
she's crying, she's crying!
Love awaits you in the new house!
In the new house love is waiting!
She's crying! She's crying!
Even now a little cradle stands
ready near the bed!
She's crying! She's crying!

(E la sposa finalmente piange. Allora cessa la villotta e scoppia una risata. La porta della casa di bara Giacomo si apre e la sposa e il corteo entrano)

LORENZO

Ah, la gioia degli altri
è un gran veleno!
*(stringe a sè Marussa, che gli si abbandona
sul petto, e la bacia)*
Marussa, vedi?

MARUSSA

Chiedimi a mio padre!

SCENA ULTIMA

Mentre i due amanti strettasi la mano fanno
per lasciarsi, ecco Menico.

[11] MENICO

Non l'ho trovato!
E chi sa dove s'è ficcato?
È forse a bere!
E è mal per un corsore
*(accorgendosi della presenza di qualcuno nel
cortiletto)*
Chi è?!
(afferra Lorenzo che stà per fuggire)
Voi chi siete? Che fate?
Siete un ladro?
*(nella casa di Giacomo, Biagio riprende la
villotta)*

LORENZO

Lorenzo son, figlio di bara Bortolo!

*(The bride finally weeps. Then the villotta stops,
and people burst into laughter. The door to Bara
Giacomo's house opens, and the bride and the
people forming the procession enter.)*

LORENZO

Ah, the joy felt by others
is a lethal poison!
*(He pulls Marussa to him, she falls into his
embrace, and he kisses her.)*
Marussa, do you see?

MARUSSA

Ask my father for permission to marry me!

LAST SCENE

While the two lovers clasp hands in a gesture of
farewell, Menico comes.

[11] MENICO

I didn't find him!
And who knows where he's hiding!
Maybe he's gone for drink!
And that's bad for a bailiff!
*(Noticing that somebody is present in the little
courtyard)*
Who is it?
(He grabs Lorenzo, who is trying to flee.)
Who are you? What are you doing?
Are you a thief?
*(In Giacomo's house, Biagio again strikes up the
villotta.)*

LORENZO

I'm Lorenzo, Bara Bortolo's son!

MENICO (*accòrto della presenza di Marussa*)
Anche Marussa!
(*furente*)
In casa! In casa!
(*Lorenzo fa per avvicinarsi e Menico gli grida brutalmente respingendolo:*)
Via di qua!

MARUSSA (*risoluta*)
Padre, Lorenzo
fa con me all'amore
e vuole domandarvi la mia mano!
Oh non vi chieda invano di chiamarsi figlio
Lorenzo mio.

LORENZO
Che adora e chiede a voi
Marussa bella.

MARUSSA
Nel dubbio e nel desio padre
ci trema il cor!

MENICO
Da Adamo in poi
nella casa di Menico
soltanto i padri danno le figlie ai mariti!
(*Menico afferra per un braccio Marussa e la caccia dentro la porta*)
In casa! In casa, dico!
Oh, la sfacciata!

MARUSSA
O madre mia! O madre, o madre mia!

MENICO
Marussa, o madre mia!

MENCIO (*having noticed that Marussa is present*)
Marussa too!
(*Enraged*)
Get in the house! Get in the house!
(*Lorenzo tries to come forward, and Menico shouts at him, pushing him back with brute force.*)
Get out of here!

MARUSSA (*resolutely*)
Father, Lorenzo
is in love with me
and wants to ask you for my hand!
Oh, let not my Lorenzo ask you in vain to be
called your son.

LORENZO
He who adores beautiful Marussa
and asks you for her.

MARUSSA
Father, my heart trembles
between doubt and desire!

MENICO
From Adam's time until today
in Menico's house the fathers alone have given
daughters to husbands!
(*Menico grabs Marussa by one arm and shoves her in through the door.*)
Into the house! Into the house, I say!
Oh, the shameless girl!

MARUSSA
O mother mine! O mother, O mother mine!

MENICO
Marussa, O mother mine!

ATTO SECONDO

La Scena

In casa di Menico. Spaziosa stanza a primo piano ove suole abitualmente trattenersi la famiglia dignanese. Nel fondo due porte.

Quella di sinistra, avente sul sopra porta un piccolo altare con una Madonna di gesso di pinto, mette alla stanza di Marussa; l'altra a destra mette alla scala per la quale ad scende alle stanze inferiori.

Fra 'le due porte un camino a larga cappa ornata di una cortina di mussola bianca; sulla cornice vi sono diverse stoviglie di terra cotta. Alla catena che pende dal camino sta appesa una caldaia. In mezzo alla stanza una tavola, e sedie rustiche; alla parte sinistra un divano di paglia; a destra due finestre che guardano sulla strada. Fra le due finestre una panca di legno con due secchi di rame. La parete sopra la panca è addobbata di piatti e utensili di rame. Alla parete di sinistra due quadri. Dal soffitto pendono in gran numero pannocchie di grano turco legate a mazzi.

SCENA PRIMA

La porta della cameretta di Marussa è aperta e si vede dentro Menico che fruga nel canterano della figlia apréndo e chiudendo cassetti. Biagio è in scena presso alla porta di destra guardando alla scala.

[12] MENICO (*di dentro indispettito*)
E nulla!

BIAGIO
Ancora nulla?

ACT II

The Stage Set

In Menico's house. A spacious room, stage front, where Dignano families are accustomed to spend their time. In the back, two doors. The door on the left has above it a little Madonna of painted gesso on a little altar and leads to Marussa's room; the other door, on the right, leads to the stairs going down to the lower rooms. Between the two doors, a chimney with a broad hood decorated with a curtain of white muslin; on the mantelpiece, assorted terracotta tableware. A cauldron is hanging on a chain suspended from the chimney. In the middle of the room, a table with rustic chairs; on the left side, a wicker divan; on the right, two windows looking out on the street. Between the two windows, there is a wooden bench with two copper receptacles. The wall over the bench is decorated with plates and copper utensils. On the left wall, two paintings. A great number of corncobs gathered in bunches are hanging from the ceiling.

FIRST SCENE

The door of Marussa's little chamber is open, and inside Menico is seen rummaging through his daughter's chest of drawers, opening and closing boxes. Biagio is on the stage, near the door on the right, looking toward the stairs.

[12] MENICO (*from inside, upset*)
There's nothing!

BIAGIO
Nothing yet?

Possibile non è!
Cercate ancora!

MENICO (*apre e rinchioda altri cassetti*)
No – nulla trovo, affé!

BIAGIO
Benedetta fanciulla!
Certo è un oggetto d'or!
Cercate nello stipo,
fra i gioielli della fu vostra moglie!

MENICO (*esce dalla camera di Marussa con uno stipo che depone sulla tavola*)
Varcare quelle soglie
lo posso, ma guardare
in questo stipo, no!
Cercate voi, però se vi piace cercare!
(*superstizioso*)
Mia moglie è morta,
ed era assai bisbetica;
io del mondo di là
nulla ne so, ma più con lei
non voglio avere a fare!

BIAGIO
Io l'aprirò!
E sarà stato Biagio
che avrà dato marito a vostra figlia!
Giudizio e adagio!
(*Chiude a chiave la porta che dà sulla scala;
apre lo stipo*)
Ora guardar potete!
(*Menico fa un gesto di paura e si allontana
superstizioso dallo stipo*)
Bene, sedete là sul canapé
gli occhi rivolti a me!

It isn't possible!
Keep looking!

MENICO (*opens and closes other boxes*)
No, I haven't found anything, believe me!

BIAGIO
Blessed girl!
Surely there's a piece of gold jewelry!
Look in the chest
among your late wife's jewels!

MENICO (*comes out of Marussa's chamber with a chest and puts it on the table*)
I can cross those thresholds,
but to look
in this box, no!
But you look, if it pleases you to look!
(*Superstitiously*)
My wife is dead,
and she was quite the shrew;
I know nothing about the afterlife,
but I don't want to have
anything more to do with her!

BIAGIO
I'll open it!
And it'll be Biagio
who'll give your daughter to her husband!
Due caution and not too fast!
(*He locks the door leading to the stairs; he opens
the chest.*)
Now you can look!
(*Menico makes a gesture of fear and superstitiously
moves away from the chest.*)
Good, sit on the sofa,
looking at me!

Se per caso vedete
oggetti ignoti,
tosto m'avvertite;
che se un ne passerà
allor tossite;
il dono di Lorenzo quel sarà.
(Menico siede e Biagio estrae ad uno ad uno dallo stipo diversi oggetti d'argento e d'oro – ma Menico crolla sempre il capo)
Ancora nulla?

MENICO
Nulla ancor!
(Biagio alla fine fa vedere che lo stipo è vuoto)
Però vi manca un cuoricino d'or.

BIAGIO
Sì? Quello è il dono di Marussa!
(rimette gli oggetti nello stipo che Menico riporta in camera di Marussa)

MENICO *(torna, e rinchiusa la porta della camera di Marussa)*
Ma siete certo voi
dei doni e giuramenti?

BIAGIO
Vi dissi: L'altro di
trovai Lorenzo ed era lieto assai;
ond'io sorpreso allor lo stuzzicai ...
ed egli prese a dir così:
»Quel vecchio infame e avaro ...«

MENICO
Avanti!

If by chance you see
unfamiliar objects,
advise me immediately;
if there's one you don't know,
then cough;
it'll be Lorenzo's gift.
(Menico sits down, and Biagio extracts various objects of silver and gold one by one from the chest – but Menico always shakes his head.)
Nothing yet?

MENICO
Nothing yet!
(Biagio, on finishing, shows him that the chest is empty.)
But a little gold heart is missing.

BIAGIO
Is that so? That's Marussa's gift!
(He puts the objects back in the chest, which Menico takes back into Marussa's chamber.)

MENICO *(returns and again closes the door of Marussa's chamber)*
Are you sure
about the gifts and the vows?

BIAGIO
I told you: The other day
I met Lorenzo, and he was quite happy;
and then taken by surprise I got him to talk,
and he started saying things like this:
"What an infamous and avaricious old man ..."

MENICO
Go on!

BIAGIO

... »senza cuore« ...

MENICO

Avanti, dico!

BIAGIO

... »superbo, prepotente
e inganna prossimo«.

Così di voi diceva.

MENICO

Avanti!

BIAGIO

... »ci vuole far morir
di crepacuore
come morì sua moglie?
Ah, no! Lo sfido
e me ne rido!
Io tengo un talismano
e un altro ne ha Marussa
che eterna il nostro amore.

Sebben non ci vediamo
pur d'amarci sentiamo ...
e noi ci amiamo!«

E rise e sogghignando se n'andò.
Ed io ho pensato al talismano!
Sento che il talisman
è un don con giuramento
perché giurar sovra un dono
a Dignano si chiama »talismano«.
Or subito opinai che,
se troviamo il dono di Lorenzo
e il rimandiamo,
questi il suo don tosto rimanderà!
Voi mi capite?

BIAGIO

... "without a heart" ...

MENICO

Go on, I say!

BIAGIO

... "haughty, arrogant,
and he cheats his neighbors."
That's what he said about you.

MENICO

Go on!

BIAGIO

... "is this about dying
of a broken heart,
the way his wife died?
Ah, no! I despise him
and I laugh at him!
I have a talisman,
and Marussa has another one
meaning that our love is forever.
Although we don't see each other,
we feel love for each other,
and we do love each other!"
And he laughed and went off with a grin.
And I've been thinking about the talisman!
I know that the talisman
is a gift with a vow
because swearing on a gift
in Dignano is called a talisman.
So I immediately thought
that if we find Lorenzo's gift
and send it back to him,
he'll send back his gift forthwith!
Do you understand me?

È cosa scaltra assai
né déesi saper mai.
E il don trovato, la vostra figliuola
si sposerà Nicola!
Ora vediamo dove può celare
una fanciulla un don d'amore!
(riflette)

MENICO

Temo che noi ...

BIAGIO *(seccato interrompendolo)*

Lasciatemi pensare!
Ha picciolo volume
cosa che vuoi ascosa.
E s'è cosa d'amore
sovente sta sul cuore.
Era ai miei di
più pratico costume!
Erano sguardi,
e si donavan baci!
Eran senza volume
i bei doni d'allor! *(sospira)*
Anello? Lo si vede!
Tremoli? Fazzoletto?
Collana? Spilla? No!
Ah, davvero non so
e invano abbiam frugato
ogni cassetto!
Figlie, che da natura
ogni astuzia imparate,
dove, dove celate
i doni dell'amor?
Ah, certo li tenete
là dove a un solo amante
vien dato di cercar!
(Si guarda intorno,

It's a clever scheme,
and that's all one needs to know.
And when the gift is found, your daughter
will marry Nicola!
Now let's see where a girl
might hide a love gift!
(He reflects.)

MENICO

I fear that we ...

BIAGIO *(brusquely interrupting him)*

Let me think!
It's small in size,
the thing that one wants to hide.
And if it's a love token,
often it's on the heart.
In my time it was
a custom very much in practice!
There were glances,
and there were kisses!
The fine gifts of those times
were of negligible size! *(He sighs.)*
A ring? You'll see it!
Bracelets? A scarf?
A necklace? A brooch? No!
Ah, in truth I don't know,
and we've rummaged in vain
through every box!
Daughters, who by nature
learn every clever trick,
where, where, do you hide
love gifts?
Ah, certainly you have them
where only a lover
would come looking!
(He looks around,

*ma ad un tratto la Madonna che sta sopra la
porta attira tutta la sua attenzione)*

MENICO (*seduto, riflette a sua volta*)

Ecco un povero padre
a che è ridotto!
Essere vilipeso in casa e fuori!
Disobbedito! Offeso!
E non c'è motto
che gli sia risparmiato, né dolor!
Questo perché?
Perché ho un po' di denaro.
Per questo avvien
che il primo scioperato,
che derubarmi vuol,
mi chiami avaro,
e la mia figlia m'abbia innamorato!
(*animandosi*)
Difendo la mia roba?
Vecchio infame!
Domando controdote?
Prepotente, inganna prossimo!
Perché un faniente cavarsi vuole
in casa mia la fame!
O figlie, o figlie, o sesso benedetto,
sesso bizzarro
che a scopo d'amore
al maschio porteresti
insieme al cuore tutta la casa ...
e la cantina e il letto!

BIAGIO

To', una Madonna!
(*afferra una sedia e la avvicina alla porta
dove sta l'altare*)

*but suddenly the Madonna above the door attracts
his undivided attention.)*

MENICO (*seated, does some reflecting of his own*)

Look at a poor father,
to what he's reduced!
Made a mockery at home and on the street!
Disobeyed! Offended!
And it won't be long
before he's made to suffer for it!
This, why?
Because I have a little bit of money.
For this reason
the first schemer
who wants to clean me out
calls me avaricious
and has fallen in love with my daughter on me!
(*Becoming excited*)
Do I defend my property? –
Infamous old man!
Do I demand a morning gift? –
Arrogant, I cheat my neighbors!
Just think: a ne'er-do-well wants
to ruin my house's good reputation!
O daughters, O daughters, O blessed sex,
bizarre sex
that with love as its object
you've given to your dear boy,
along with your heart, the entire house ...
and the cellar and the bed!

BIAGIO

Look, a Madonna!
(*He grabs a chair and goes to the door
with the altar.*)

MENICO

Biagio, che fate?

BIAGIO

Ecco un'idea! Penso!

Fanciulla innamorata

è fanciulla che crede!

L'amor come la fede

è una cosa del cuore.

E se ella è sventurata

doppiamente essa crede.

Sol spera nella fede

un infelice amore!

Se ugual dunque e

così fu il mondo il dono è qui!

*(Sale sopra la sedia e fruga fra
i candelieri e i fiori)*

MENICO

Biagio, è un peccato!

BIAGIO

Mi confesserò!

*(Biagio prima di toccar la statuetta, si fa il
segno di croce – poi, presala, la volta e la
rivolta. Un oggetto cade a terra)*

MENICO *(raccogliendolo)*

Un orecchino d'uomo!

BIAGIO *(trionfante, ricolloca a suo posto la
statuetta).*

È il dono di Lorenzo!

MENICO

Biagio, what are you doing?

BIAGIO

Consider this idea! I'm thinking!

A girl in love

is a girl who believes!

Love, like faith,

is a matter of the heart.

And if she's unfortunate,

then she believes twice as much.

An unhappy heart

hopes in faith alone!

And if the world turns

as it always has – the gift is here!

*(He gets on the chair and looks among
the candle stands and the flowers.)*

MENICO

Biagio, it's a sin!

BIAGIO

I'll confess!

*(Before touching the statuette, Biagio makes
the sign of the cross. Then, having taken the
statuette, he turns it this way and that. An object
falls to the ground.)*

MENICO *(recognizing it)*

A man's earring!

BIAGIO *(triumphantly, he places the statuette
back in its place)*

It's Lorenzo's gift!

MENICO
E or?

BIAGIO
Ritornarlo a nome di ...

MENICO
Marussa?

BIAGIO
E con Lorenzo poi io faccio il resto!
Ora convien trovar
chi porti e parli!
*(nel passare avanti alla finestra guarda fuori a
caso e vedendo fuori passare la Luze a un tratto
grida)*
Eccola!

MENICO
Chi?

BIAGIO
Quella fanciulla slava!
Quella che vende
asparagi del Prostimò!
Qui state,
e mentre sto parlando,
a caso se a voi mi rivolgo,
voi dite, sì!
Che due piccioni colgo!
Intanto voi cortesia fingete ...
la figlia accarezzate ...
e il burbero non fate!

MENICO
Ho inteso!

MENICO
And now?

BIAGIO
Return it in the name of ...

MENICO
Marussa?

BIAGIO
And with Lorenzo I'll do the rest!
Now it's time to arrange for somebody
to take it and to speak!
*(While going toward the window he happens to
look outside, sees Luze passing by, and sudden-
ly shouts:)*
There she is!

MENICO
Who?

BIAGIO
That Slav girl!
The one who sells
asparagus from Prostimò!
Stay here,
and while I'm talking,
in case I turn to you,
you'll say: Yes!
I'll kill two birds with one stone!
Meanwhile, you'll pretend to be polite ...
you'll be nice to your daughter ...
and you won't play the grump!

MENICO
I've understood!

BIAGIO

E me ne vo!
(corre via)

SCENA SECONDA

13 MENICO

Diavolo d'uom!
Scaltro e ... pericoloso.
Sì, con Marussa, è vero,
io fui sempre impetuoso!
Or se essa perde l'affezione
e se disobbedisce
ha un po' ragione!
Sarò cortese e lusinghiero!
È strano! In questo matrimonio
d'assai s'ingentilisce il mio carattere!
(si mette alla finestra e guarda)
Eccolo! Biagio parla
e quella ascolta!
Ecco or risponde!
Ah! Biagio, ecco, si volta!
*(accenna reiteratamente col capo di sì
e grida:)*
Sì! Sì!
Essa prende il dono e poi s'avvia!

SCENA TERZA

Entra Marussa con una cesta di filo dipanato
sulla testa,
Ma appena posatala, si accorge di suo padre.

BIAGIO

And now I'm going!
(He hurries away.)

SECOND SCENE

13 MENICO

A devil of man!
Scheming ... and dangerous.
Yes, with Marussa, it's true,
I was always a bit hot-tempered!
Now if she loses her affection
and disobeys,
she has some reason to do so!
I'll be polite and flattering!
It's strange! In this marriage business
my character has become very gentle!
(He goes to window and looks.)
There he is! Biagio is speaking,
and she's listening!
Now she's responding!
Ah! Biagio, look, he's turning!
*(He repeatedly moves his head, signaling "yes"
and shouts:)*
Yes! Yes! –
She's taking the gift, and now she's going away!

THIRD SCENE

Marussa enters with balls of yarn in a basket on
her head, but she has scarcely put it down when
she notices her father.

CD 2

1 MARUSSA

Mio padre!

MENICO (*grida con affetto caricato*)

Amata figlia! Anima mia!

(Non so che dir.)

Figliola ...

MARUSSA

Parlate, padre! Dite! Che volete?

MENICO

Tu sei la mia consolazione sola!

Sei buona ed io m'accorro
per quel che sai!

Pur, credi a me! E vedrai!

Vorrei dire una cosa!

Che se sicuro fossi ...

MARUSSA

Ebbene?

MENICO

Di darti in sposa

ad un che ti vuol bene,

foss'egli non so chi ...

sa dio che ...

MARUSSA

O padre mio!

(*commossa, corre a suo padre*

lo abbraccia)

CD 2

1 MARUSSA

My father!

MENICO (*shouts with affected fondness*)

Beloved daughter! My life!

(I don't know what to say.)

My little girl ...

MARUSSA

Speak, father! Say! What do you want?

MENICO

You're my only consolation!

Be a good girl, and I'm sorry
about – you know what!

But, believe me! And you'll see!

I'd like to say something!

That if I were certain ...

MARUSSA

Well?

MENICO

That I could give you in marriage

to a man who loves you well,

no matter who he might be ...

God knows that ...

MARUSSA

O my father!

(*Moved, she runs to her father*

and embraces him.)

SCENA QUARTA

2 BIAGIO

Si può? Si può?

MENICO (*simulando sorpresa*)

To', è Biagio!

BIAGIO (*rapidamente gli mostra un involtino*)

Ho il cuoricin!

Lasciateci!

Ho portato ...

(Tutto andò ben!)

... campioni di semente

e giù c'è bara Toni ad aspettare!

MENICO

Ah, finalmente!

(*e corre via*)

BIAGIO (*con mistero*)

V'ho da parlare.

MARUSSA

Con me?

BIAGIO

Con voi!

MARUSSA

Parlate!

BIAGIO

Incominciare come non so!

MARUSSA

Perché?

FOURTH SCENE

2 BIAGIO

May I? May I?

MENICO (*feigning surprise*)

Look, it's Biagio!

BIAGIO (*quickly shows him a little package*)

I have the little heart!

Here it is!

I've brought ...

(Everything went well!)

... seed samples,

and Bara Toni is waiting downstairs!

MENICO

Ah, finally!

(*He runs on his way.*)

BIAGIO (*with mystery*)

I need to talk to you.

MARUSSA

To me?

BIAGIO

To you!

MARUSSA

Speak!

BIAGIO

I don't know how to begin!

MARUSSA

Why?

BIAGIO

Perché quando s'è buoni, ah!
certe commissioni
al cuore fanno male!

MARUSSA

Suvvia, parlate!
Così voi m'impaurite!
Così non mi tenete!
Che c'è? Che c'è?
Deh, dite!

BIAGIO

Ma pria, Marussa, andate
e quell'uscio chiudete!
(Marussa va e chiude l'uscio)
Son mandato!

MARUSSA *(con gran grido di gioia)*

È Lorenzo! È Lorenzo!
Che vi invia!
Dite, è Lorenzo?

BIAGIO *(fingendo imbarazzato)*

Sì!

MARUSSA

Perché dite quel «sì» così?

BIAGIO

Marussa, figlia mia,
l'uom è un insiem di carne
senza cuore!

MARUSSA *(colpita)*

Voi mi portate dunque
una sventura?

BIAGIO

When things are going fine, ah!
but certain assignments
bring grief to the heart!

MARUSSA

Go on, speak!
You're frightening me!
Don't keep me in suspense!
What is it? What is it?
Come on, say!

BIAGIO

But first, Marussa, go
and close that door!
(Marussa goes and closes the door.)
I've been sent here!

MARUSSA *(with a loud shout of joy)*

It's Lorenzo! It's Lorenzo!
He's sent you!
Say, is it Lorenzo?

BIAGIO *(feigning embarrassment)*

Yes!

MARUSSA

Why did you say that "yes" like that?

BIAGIO

Marussa, my girl,
the man is a mass of flesh
without a heart!

MARUSSA *(stricken)*

Then you're bringing me
bad news?

BIAGIO

Vi reco ... un dono.
(*le dà l'involto*)

MARUSSA (*con un grido di dolore e stupore*)
Il cuoricino d'or!

BIAGIO

Povera creatura!
Amor d'uomo non dura!

MARUSSA (*sempre gli occhi fissi sul suo
cuoricino d'oro*)
Non m'ama più!

BIAGIO (*continuando*)
... siffatta è la natura falsa
dell'uom che ancor
se dice il vero ...

MARUSSA

Non m'ama più!

BIAGIO

... è sempre menzognero!
Saperne io non volea ...

MARUSSA

Non m'ama più!

BIAGIO

... è sempre menzognero!
Saperne io non volea ...

MARUSSA

Non m'ama più!

BIAGIO

To you I deliver ... a gift.
(*He gives her the packet.*)

MARUSSA (*with a shout of pain and astonishment*)
The little gold heart!

BIAGIO

Poor creature!
A man's love doesn't last!

MARUSSA (*continuing to fix her eyes on the
little gold heart*)
He doesn't love me anymore!

BIAGIO (*continuing*)
... such is the false character
of the man who now
if he tells the truth ...

MARUSSA

He doesn't love me anymore!

BIAGIO

... is proven to be a liar!
I didn't want to hear a word of it ...

MARUSSA

He doesn't love me anymore!

BIAGIO

... is proven to be a liar!
I didn't want to hear a word of it ...

MARUSSA

He doesn't love me anymore!

BIAGIO

... ed egli mi dicea:
»Vi dico è buona azione,
ché suo padre non vuole!
Or sfidar dio?»

MARUSSA

O mio Lorenzo!

BIAGIO

... »Questa relazione
non può durar,
ond'io mi scioglio!«
Ma ... altra cagione
(*con intenzione*)
sotto però ci vedo!
Altra ragione, credo!

MARUSSA (*colpita*)

Un'altra egli ama?
Dite! Un altro amore?

BIAGIO

Ah, gli uomini son falsi
e senza cuore!
(*Marussa scoppia in pianto e si lascia cader
sopra una Seggiola*)
No, così non piangete!

MARUSSA

Piangere
deh, mi lasciate!
Che scorrano le lagrime!
Ch'io pianga sempre!
Sempre! Sempre! Sempre!

BIAGIO

... and he told me:
"I tell you, it's the right thing to do,
for her father doesn't want it!
Then to challenge God?"

MARUSSA

O my Lorenzo!

BIAGIO

... "This relationship
can't last,
and so I'm breaking it off!"
But ... another reason
(*deliberately*)
I see behind this!
Another reason, I do believe!

MARUSSA (*stricken*)

He loves another girl?
Say! Another love?

BIAGIO

Ah, men are false
and heartless!
(*Marussa bursts into tears and throws herself
down on a chair.*)
No, don't cry like this!

MARUSSA

Oh, please,
do let me cry!
Let my tears pour down!
Let me cry always!
Always! Always! Always!

BIAGIO (*fra se*)

È un brutto imbroglione questo!

Se la cosa si saprà,
dirò che è stato Menico,
e crederanno!

È Menico, si sa,

un uomo avaro, duro e disonesto!

D'altra parte Nicola

è un buon ragazzo ...

e dall'altra quell'altro è pazzo

ed ha le mani pronte ...

(fa il gesto di adoperare il coltello)

e non vorrei!

Ma a Luze un po' di colpa

dar potrei!

Io mi commuovo intanto

che mi fa male il pianto!

Ah, questo è il guaio vil dell'esistenza,

l'aver a dialogar colla coscienza!

MARUSSA (*ricorda colla voce piena di lagrime quella sera quando Lorenzo per chiamarla alla finestra passava sotto alla casa sua cantando, la sera che fu con lui sorpresa da suo padre*)

Se passo e non saluto,

lo faccio per la gente

e me ne vo discreto e muto

e fo l'amor secretamente.

Il cuore m'hai rubato!

E cantava! E passava!

Ed io l'udivo!

Era il segnal!

Scendevo nella via!

Marussa bella

mi vuoi far morire ...

BIAGIO (*aside*)

This is a nasty mess!

If the matter becomes known,

I'll say that it was Menico,

and they'll believe it!

Menico is, it's known,

an avaricious, hard, and dishonest man!

On the other hand, Nicola

is a good boy ...

and besides that other fellow is a fool

and has his hands ready ...

(he makes a gesture as if handling a knife)

and I wouldn't want!

But I could give Luze

a bit of the blame!

Now I'm moved

because her lament is making me feel bad!

Ah, this is the rotten lot in human existence,

to have to dialogue with one's conscience!

MARUSSA (*remembers with a voice filled with tears the evening when Lorenzo came to call her to the window and was passing below her house and singing, the evening when her father surprised her with him.*)

If I pass by and don't greet,

I do it because of the people,

and I go by discreetly and silently,

and I do love secretly.

You've robbed my heart!

And he sang! And he went by! –

And I heard him!

It was the signal! –

I went down to the street!

Marussa, beauty,

you'll be the death of me ...

Un'ora d'ansia
è tutta una stagione,
ché mi divora la passione
pe' tuoi begli occhi, e si sa!
La prudenza non può
farla tener all'impazienza
del mio destino
che t'ha fatta venir sul mio cammino!
E poscia? ... E poscia:
benedetta bocca!
Cara! Adorata!
Allor fu ch'io giurai ...
Ei m'ha baciata! Sì!
Poscia m'ha baciata sulla bocca.
*(Marussa prorompe in un lungo schianto
affannoso di pianto).*

BIAGIO *(si avvicina imbarazzato dalla piega
che prende il colloquio suo con Marussa,
alla porta e senza farsi scorgere vi bussa
adagiò)*
(Sarebbe l'ora che venisse Menico!)

MARUSSA *(mostrando il cuoricino d'oro a Biagio)*
Vedete, Biagio?
Aveva con questo dono
l'anima di Marussa e l'amor!
L'anima mia teneva entro
al sottile e fragile guscio
del dono d'or!
Qui vera la mia vita,
la speme e, dico, l'anima!
Sì, mi sarei dannata,
anche, per lui!
Finita è l'esistenza or dunque!
L'amor m'ha abbandonata!
Lorenzo m'ha lasciata!

One hour of anxiety
is an entire season,
for passion for your beautiful eyes
devours me, and it's a known fact!
Prudence can't contain
the impatience
of my fate,
which made you cross my path!
And then? ... And then:
Blessed mouth!
My dear! My adored!
Then I swore!
And he kissed me! Yes!
Then he kissed me on the lips.
*(Marussa bursts into a long and loud
fit of grief.)*

BIAGIO *(embarrassed by the turn that his
conversation with Marussa has taken, goes
toward the door and slowly knocks without
calling attention to himself)*
(It should be time for Menico to be coming!)

MARUSSA *(showing the little gold heart to Biagio)*
Do you see, Biagio?
He had with this gift
Marussa's life and love!
He had my life
in the fragile and small shape
of this gift of gold!
My life was here,
my hope, and, I say, my soul!
Yes, I'd be ruined,
too, for him!
Now my life is over!
My love has forsaken me!
Lorenzo has left me!

BIAGIO (*commosso*)
Ah, voi mi fate piangere!

MARUSSA (*con impeto*)
Ma bada, Lorenzo, iddio
punire ti saprà!
Sì, per queste mie lagrime
iddio ti punirà!
Sì, per queste mie lagrime
iddio ti punirà!

SCENA QUINTA

3 MENICO
Marussa piange!
Chi l'ha fatta piangere?

BIAGIO
(All'uscio spiava!)

MARUSSA
O babbo, queste lagrime
le piango sol per colpa mia!
Ma, padre, Marussa vostra
ora non piange più!
(risoluta si asciuga gli occhi)
Son finite le lagrime!
Vi ricordate, babbo, quel disgusto?
Quella tal sera?
Chiedo perdono ...
e pronta ad obbedirvi sono!
M'avete detto:
»Sposerai Nicola!?!«
Ebben sia:
Nicola sposerò!

BIAGIO (*moved*)
Ah, you're making me cry!

MARUSSA (*vigorously*)
But know, Lorenzo, God
will find a way to punish you!
Yes, for these tears of mine,
God will punish you!
Yes, for these tears of mine,
God will punish you!

FIFTH SCENE

3 MENICO
Marussa is crying!
Who's made you cry?

BIAGIO
(He was listening at the door!)

MARUSSA
O Papa, I shed these tears
for my fault alone!
But, father, your Marussa
now won't cry anymore!
(Resolutely and drying her eyes)
My tears are over and done!
Do you remember, Papa, that unpleasant moment?
That evening?
I beg pardon ...
and am ready to obey you!
You said to me:
"Will you marry Nicola?"
Well let it be:
I'll marry Nicola!

MENICO

O mia Marussa!

BIAGIO

Brava! Brava! Brava!

Voi siete veramente di Dignano!

MENICO

E ve' presentimento!

È giù Nicola!

BIAGIO (*subito si da a chiamare urlando*)

O Nicola, Nicola, su salite!

MARUSSA

No, sentite ...

MENICO (*alla scala*)

Nicola!

NICOLA (*di dentro*)

Salgo?

MENICO E BIAGIO

Sì!

MARUSSA

Vado a bagnarmi gli occhi.

Non voglio ch'egli vegga

queste lagrime!

(*corre e si chiude nella sua camera*)

MENICO (*a Biagio*)

O come?

BIAGIO

Dirò poi!

MENICO

O my Marussa!

BIAGIO

Brava! Brava! Brava!

You're truly a Dignano girl!

MENICO

Look, what a coincidence!

Nicola is downstairs!

BIAGIO (*immediately calls with a shout*)

O Nicola, Nicola, come up!

MARUSSA

No, listen ...

MENICO (*at the stairs*)

Nicola!

NICOLA (*from within*)

Should I come up?

MENICO AND BIAGIO

Yes!

MARUSSA

I'm going to wash my face.

I don't want him

to see these tears!

(*She runs and locks herself into her chamber.*)

MENICO (*to Biagio*)

But how?

BIAGIO

I'll say later!

Or presto!
Andate a prendere
due amiche di vostra figlia.

MENICO
Vado!
(corre via mentre entra Nicola)

NICOLA
Son qua!

BIAGIO
E voi andate presto
a prendere i colleghi!

NICOLA *(appoggiandosi al tavolo per la
grande commozione)*
O ciel!
Dunque Marussa?

BIAGIO
Sì!

NICOLA
M'accetta?

BIAGIO
Sì. Or tosto la promessa!

NICOLA *(senza muoversi)*
Vo!

BIAGIO
E tacete!
Movetevi!

Now quick!
Go and get
two of your daughter's friends.

MENICO
I'm going!
(He exits running while Nicola enters.)

NICOLA
I'm here!

BIAGIO
And you go quick
and get your friends!

NICOLA *(leaning on the table because he is
greatly moved)*
O heavens!
Then Marussa?

BIAGIO
Yes!

NICOLA
She accepts me?

BIAGIO
Yes. Now quick, the betrothal!

NICOLA *(without moving)*
I'm going!

BIAGIO
And keep quiet!
Get moving!

NICOLA
E Marussa?

BIAGIO
È là!
Ma andate!

NICOLA (*invece di incamminarsi si rivolge
alla porta della camera di Marussa e grida*)
Marussa, v'è un altar ...

BIAGIO (*cercando di farlo tacere*)
A che gridate?

NICOLA
... de la vostra stanzetta
al limitare, io ...

BIAGIO
Siete pazzo?

NICOLA
... giuro ...

BIAGIO
Basta, andate!

NICOLA (*grida*)
... per la pietà che avete
del mio amore!

BIAGIO
Andate!

MENICO
Andate!

NICOLA
And Marussa?

BIAGIO
She's in there! –
But go!

NICOLA (*instead of going, he goes toward
Marussa's door and shouts:*)
Marussa, there's an altar here ...

BIAGIO (*attempting to get him to be quiet*)
What's with this shouting of yours?

NICOLA
... at the entrance
to your little chamber, I ...

BIAGIO
Are you crazy?

NICOLA
... I swear ...

BIAGIO
Enough, go!

NICOLA (*shouting*)
... by the respect that you have
for my love!

BIAGIO
Go!

MENICO
Go!

BIAGIO
Andate!

MENICO E BIAGIO
Andate, presto!

(Biagio e Menico spingono fuori Nicola)

SCENA SESTA

4 MENICO (*sottovoce a Biagio*)
Non c'è che dir;
siete un grand'uomo!

BIAGIO
Presto,
de le cantine vostre
il vin migliore!

MENICO
Curioso son!

BIAGIO (*rapidamente, ma sottovoce*)
Seguìi Luze
e la vidi dare a Lorenzo
l'orecchin d'or;
allor io subentraì
e tanto seppi
che come un pazzo ...
Son qua le colleghe!

(entrano due ragazze)

MENICO (*va loro incontro con buon viso e cosa strana incredibile, per le due ragazze – anche con buone maniere*)

BIAGIO
Go!

MENICO AND BIAGIO
Go, quick!

(Biagio and Menico push Nicola out.)

SIXTH SCENE

4 MENICO (*sotto voce, to Biagio*)
What more is there to say:
you're a magnificent fellow!

BIAGIO
Quick,
bring the best wine
from your cellars!

MENICO
I'm curious!

BIAGIO (*rapidly, but sotto voce*)
I followed Luze,
and I saw her give
the little gold heart to Lorenzo;
then I stayed with him
and learned
how a madman ...
Her friends are here!

(Two girls enter.)

MENICO (*goes toward them with a pleasant expression on his face and – a strange and incredible thing, for the two girls – also with good manners*)

Ah, grazie, e buona sera!
(*e le fa entrare io camera di Marussa*)

(*Biagio intanto accende i lumi sul camino, sulla tavola, e le candele di un piccolo lampadario ed anche una lucerna a petrolio, mentre Menico esce e torna con bottiglie di vino e piatti di crostoli e ciambelle*)

MENICO (*disponendo le bottiglie*)
Vin di rosa!
Terrano! Qui il refosco ...
Poi vin bianco
e vin struccato!

(*Biagio va e viene con bicchieri e piatti*)

BIAGIO
Tutto è preparato!

(*Nicola entra seguito da due suoi amici*)

NICOLA
Che colpo pe' l paese!

BIAGIO (*contrariato da quella notizia*)
Avete detto!?

NICOLA
No, l'hanno indovinato!

BIAGIO
Ah, innamorati
nemici del silenzio!
(*Ed or Lorenzo?*)

(*crolla le spalle*)

Ah, thank you, and good evening!
(*He has them go into Marussa's chamber.*)

(*Meanwhile Biagio lights the lamps on the chimney and the table, the candles on a little chandelier, and an oil lamp, while Menico goes and then comes back with bottles of wine and plates of tarts and cakes.*)

MENICO (*arranging the bottles*)
Rosé wine!
A terrano! Here the refosco ...
Then a white wine
and a struccato wine!

(*Biagio goes and returns with glasses and plates.*)

BIAGIO
Everything is ready!

(*Nicola enters, followed by his two friends*)

NICOLA
What a coup for the country!

BIAGIO (*disturbed by such news*)
You said!?

NICOLA
No, they guessed it!

BIAGIO
Ah, lovers,
enemies of silence!
(*And what about Lorenzo?*)

(*He shrugs his shoulders.*)

MENICO (*picchia alla porta di Marussa*)
Marussa, è qui Nicola!

SCENA SETTIMA

(*Esce Marussa colle colleghe*)

5 I COLLEGHI (*a Marussa*)
Marussa, buona sera.

LE COLLEGHE (*a Nicola*)
Buona sera, Nicola.

MENICO
Sedete!

BIAGIO
Giù, alla buona!

MENICO (*a Biagio*)
E voi pure sedete!
Qui gli sposi!
Ed or bevete!

(*Biagio stappa le bottiglie e Menico versa*)

(*Bevuto il primo bicchiere Biagio lo riempie un'altra volta e sollevandolo si alza.*)

BIAGIO (*sta un po' pensieroso cercando la rima, poi:*)
Alla salute bevo dell'amore
e ne bevo un bicchier
di tutto cuore!

(*Gran cozzo di bicchieri ed: Evviva Marussa*)

MENICO (*knocks at Marussa's door*)
Marussa, Nicola is here!

SEVENTH SCENE

(*Marussa comes out with her friends.*)

5 THE MALE FRIENDS (*to Marussa*)
Marussa, good evening.

THE FEMALE FRIENDS (*to Nicola*)
Good evening, Nicola.

MENICO
Sit down!

BIAGIO
Down, just like that!

MENICO (*to Biagio*)
And you sit down too!
Here, the couple!
And now drink!

(*Biagio uncorks the bottles, and Menico pours.*)

(*After drinking the first glass, Biagio fills his glass again and stands up with it raised in his hand.*)

BIAGIO (*is a little thoughtful, trying to come up with a rhyme, then:*)
I drink to the health of love,
and I drink a glass
with all my heart!

(*The loud clinking of glasses and "Evviva Marussa"*)

NICOLA (*si leva alla sua volta col bicchiere*)
Dico bevendo questa poesia:
agli occhi belli di Marussa mia!

MENICO (*sottovoce a Marussa porgendole
il bicchiere*)
A te Marussa, via!

MARUSSA
Non so che dire! ...

BIAGIO (*si leva da sedere, e in punta di piedi
va a collocarsi dietro a Marussa*)
Voi ditegli così:
io suggerisco:
Hai camminato Roma,
Franza e Spagna
non hai trovato spada
che te taglia;
ora al coltel
che ti feriva il core
bevi, Nicola bel,
bevi al mio amore!

MARUSSA (*alzandosi, con un fil di voce*)
Non so che dir!
Manca la fantasia!
Bevo e ringrazio!
Ecco la poesia!
(*Grandi evviva e gran cozzo
di bicchieri ancora*)

BIAGIO
Ed ora alle dimande!

I COLLEGHI
Alle dimande!

NICOLA (*gets up with the glass for his turn*)
I recite this piece of poetry,
drinking to my Marussa's beautiful eyes!

MENICO (*sotto voce, to Marussa, extending the
glass to her*)
It's your turn, Marussa, come now!

MARUSSA
I don't know what to say! ...

BIAGIO (*gets up from his chair and on his tiptoes
goes to stand behind Marussa*)
You'll speak to him like this;
I'll make a suggestion:
I've traveled through Rome,
France, and Spain
but haven't found a sword
to cut you;
now drink,
to the knife that wounded your heart,
drink, handsome Nicola,
drink to my love!

MARUSSA (*standing up, in a barely audible voice*)
I don't know what to say!
I don't have the right imagination!
I drink and give thanks in turn!
That's the poem!
(*A great shout of "Evviva" and the loud clinking
of glasses*)

BIAGIO
And now it's time for the pledges!

THE FRIENDS
For the pledges!

NICOLA (*in piedi a Menico*)
Qui son venuto
colla compagnia per chiedere
Marussa bella a sposa.
Volete farla mia?
E se la fate mia
Marussa bella diverrà mia sposa
presente la galante compagnia.

BIAGIO (*entusiasmato*)
Benissimo! Ben detto!
Detto bene!
(*e beve un gran bicchiere*)

MENICO (*si leva*)
(*cerca schioccando le dita le rime – beve e ri-
beve – tossisce – hum! hum! e finalmente bal-
betta stiracchiando le parole:*)
Difficoltà non ho
e, stipulati i patti,
io non dico di no!
(*poi impaperandosi*)
Anzi questa è davvero un'allegria!
Non fate complimenti
e ancor bevete!
Si fa ben altro per la compagnia!

MARUSSA (*si leva e guardando il coricino poi
dice risoluta:*)
Presente qui la compagnia
dico a Nicola
che mi chiede a sposa:
sì, quel che vuole, sia!
Marussa qui diviene la sua sposa
presente qui la compagnia.

NICOLA (*standing next to Menico*)
I've come here
in the presence of these witnesses
to ask for beautiful Marussa as my wife.
Do you want to make her mine?
And if you make her mine,
beautiful Marussa will become my wife,
in the presence of these honorable witnesses.

BIAGIO (*enthusiastically*)
Excellent! Well said!
Said well!
(*He drinks a large glass.*)

MENICO (*stands up*)
(*He stammers, trying to find the words – he drinks
and drinks again – he coughs – hum! hum! – and
at last finds the words and stutters:*)
I don't have any difficulty,
and, with the rules stipulated,
I won't say no!
(*Confusing things*)
This is truly a pleasure!
Cut the congratulations,
and get on with the drinking!
The witnesses are ready to attest to it.

MARUSSA (*gets up, looking at the little heart, and
then resolutely states:*)
In the presence of these witnesses,
I say to Nicola,
who asks for my hand in marriage,
yes, let it be as he wishes!
Marussa will become his wife,
said in the presence of these witnesses.

(Ma appena essa ha detto l'ultima parola e la sua mano si è stretta con quella di Nicola, dalla strada, sotto le finestre, si ode)

LORENZO *(canta, come usano i dignanesi, delle Bottonate contro Marussa)*

Il cor ferito m'hai
con cento spade
e i sassi ho tutto intorno insanguinato;
io porto la mia croce per le strade,
tutti sanno che m'hai assassinato.

NICOLA
Che è questo?

MARUSSA
(Ohimè, è Lorenzo!)

MENICO E BIAGIO *(a Nicola)*
(cercando di distrarlo)
Via, beviamo!

LORENZO
Ah, maledetta la stagione
e il giorno e il punto
che mi sono innamorato!

NICOLA *(si alza)*
Risponder voglio
a queste bottonate!

BIAGIO
*(L'affare si fa brutto,
brutto assai!)*

(She has scarcely said the last word and clasped hands with Nicola when the following is heard from the street, under the windows:)

LORENZO *(sings, as Dignano residents are accustomed to do, mocking songs aimed at Marussa)*

You've wounded my heart
with a hundred swords,
and I've shed blood on the stones all around;
I carry my cross through the streets;
everybody knows that you've murdered me.

NICOLA
What's this?

MARUSSA
(Oh me, it's Lorenzo!)

MENICO AND BIAGIO *(to Nicola, attempting to distract him)*
Come on, let's drink!

LORENZO
Ah, cursed be the season
and the day and the moment
that I fell in love!

NICOLA *(gets up)*
I want to respond
to these mocking songs!

BIAGIO
*(This matter is getting nasty,
very nasty!)*

LORENZO

Ah, maledetto
quando andavo ...

NICOLA

Risponder voglio!

MENICO

Quando udite
ragliare un somaro,
che fate?

LORENZO

... intorno a tue mura
modesto e consolato!
I cor ferito m'hai con cento
spade e i sassi ho tutto intorno
inasaguinato io porto la mia croce
per la strade ma
tutti san che m'hai assassinato!

MARUSSA

Sei tu, sei tu, che m'hai assassinato!

MENICO

A me!
O vagabondo, ozioso!
Ora t'aggiusto!

*(leva di tasca una manata di soldi, e
barcollando, pel vino bevuto, va alla finestra e
la getta a Lorenzo e chiude con tanta forza la
finestra che i vetri si spezzano)*

LORENZO

Sii maledetto,

LORENZO

Ah, cursed me,
when I used to go ...

NICOLA

I want to answer!

MENICO

When you hear
a donkey braying,
what do you do?

LORENZO

... around your walls
in modesty and consolation!
You've wounded my heart
with a hundred swords and rocks;
bloodied, I carry my cross
through the streets;
everybody knows that you've murdered me!

MARUSSA

It's you, it's you, you've murdered me!

MENICO

Oh me, oh mine!
You vagabond, you villain!
Now I'll fix you!

*(He takes a handful of coins from his pockets.
Tottering from the wine that he has been drinking,
he goes to the window, throws them at Lorenzo,
and closes the window with such great force that
the glass is shattered.)*

LORENZO

Curse you,

uomo senza fede,
anima vil che a Cristo
più non crede ...

MENICO

A me del senza fede?

Ah, scellerato!

(Prende un bastone e si precipita fuori – con lui, escono confusamente e rabbiosamente Nicola e i due colleghi)

MARUSSA

Ah, padre, per pietà!

Deh, lo fermate!

(e si affaccia conno pazza alla finestra, urlando fra le grida tumultuose della via)

Ah, fuggi, ti scongiuro,

o mio Lorenzo!

Ah, fuggi,

la tua vita cara salva!

No! No, crudeli!

Fuggi! Fuggi! Ti salva!

(Fuori alte suonano le voci di tutti e Marussa cade senza sentimento fra le braccia delle amiche)

man without faith,
vile soul that no longer
believes in Christ...

MENICO

Me, the man without faith?

Ah, you scoundrel!

(He takes a cane and rushes outside; Nicola and his two friends go out with him in confusion and rage.)

MARUSSA

Ah, father, for goodness' sake!

Come on, stop it!

(She appears at the window like a madwoman, with her cries being heard among the tumultuous shouts on the street.)

Ah, flee, I beg you,

O my Lorenzo!

Ah, flee,

save your dear life!

No! No, cruel men!

Flee! Flee! Save yourself!

(The loud voices of all the people sound outside, and Marussa falls without feeling into the arms of her friends.)

ATTO TERZO

La camera di Marussa.

Marussa ha già indossata la gonnella e il corpo della veste nuziale; tutto il rimandate del suo abbigliamento nuziale; il velo, i fiori ecc. sta disposto sul suo lettuccio.

La camera di Marussa ha due entrate, una al fondo e si suppone metta alla stanza nella quale si è svolto l'atto secondo, cosicché, dall'uscio aperto, possa il pubblico avvedersene; l'altra lateralmente. Una finestra vi dà luce. Il lettuccio modesto ha cortine di mussola bianca, la sua coperta pure è bianca; tutto è di una sorprendente bianchezza e nitidezza. Poche sedie – una tavola – un canterano e uno specchio appoggiato alla finestra.

All'alzarsi della tela Marussa è seduta avanti allo specchio, e sta adattandosi il conciero.

SCENA PRIMA

Si picchia all'uscio laterale.

[7] MARUSSA

Chi batte?

LUZE

È Luze!

MARUSSA (*correndo ad aprire*)

Luze! Tu?

Sei tu?

(*Marussa rinchiede ancora l'uscio*)

LUZE

Io t'ho trapunto un nastro

di mie mani,

e l'ho portato.

ACT III

Marussa's chamber.

Marussa has put on the skirt and the bodice of her wedding dress; all the rest of her wedding attire – the veil, the flowers etc. – is lying on her bed.

There are two entrances to Marussa's chamber, one in the back presumably leads to the room in which Act II took place, so that when the door is open, the audience has a view of it; the other door is on the side. A window here sends light into the room. The modest bed has curtains of white muslin, and its blanket is white; everything is of a surprising whiteness and brightness. A few chairs, a table, a chest of drawers, and a mirror resting against the window.

When the curtain rises, Marussa is seated at the mirror and adjusting her headdress.

FIRST SCENE

Knocking is heard on the side door.

[7] MARUSSA

Who's knocking?

LUZE

It's Luze!

MARUSSA (*running to open the door*)

Luze! You?

It's you?

(*Marussa closes the door.*)

LUZE

I've embroidered a ribbon

made with my own hands,

and I've brought it.

Vedi?
(mostra un involto e ne leva fuori un nastro bianco)

MARUSSA
Oh, come è bello!

LUZE
È tradizione antica
è nostro vecchio rito,
ad una cara amica
che si prende marito,
donar trapunto nastro
con una stella e un fiore.
»Bellezza« dice l'astro;
e il fiore dice »amore«.

MARUSSA (*con immenso sconforto*)
La mia bellezza?
Guardami!
Ve' come son distrutta!
Ho l'occhio stanco dal lungo pianto.
Morto è l'amore
e la bellezza muore.
Ma dimmi, Luze,
da parecchi giorni
a me non vieni.

LUZE
È ver!
Da molto tempo
a te non son venuta.

MARUSSA
Mi sovengo ...
de di di mia fidanzata!

Do you see?
(She shows a packet and takes out a white ribbon.)

MARUSSA
Oh, how pretty it is!

LUZE
It's an ancient tradition,
it's our old rite,
to give an embroidered ribbon
with a star and a flower
to a dear friend
when she takes a husband.
The star says "beauty,"
and the flower says "love."

MARUSSA (*with immense discomfort*)
My beauty?
Look at me!
Look how ugly I am!
My eyes are weary from long weeping.
Love is dead,
and beauty dies.
But tell me, Luze,
you haven't come to me
for quite some days now.

LUZE
It's true!
It's been a long time
since I came to visit you.

MARUSSA
I remember ...
since the day of my engagement!

LUZE

Fu tuo padre!

MARUSSA

Mio padre?

LUZE

Sì ... mi ha presa a lavorare

là nei suoi prati,

onde randagia più

non vado al Prostimo

per erbe e fiori!

Lavoro e canto

tutto il dì e alle pecore

sto a guardia.

Io son felice!

Stamattina però

celatamente son fuggita.

È il giorno di tue nozze

e sono venuta a offrirti

della Luze un picciol dono.

Poscia pe 'l cortiletto

e inosservata

(indica la porta laterale)

via me ne torno ...

T'ho veduta ...

E addio!

MARUSSA

No, non lasciarmi!

Ho a chiederti un favore.

LUZE

Parla!

MARUSSA

L'ultimo giorno è questo

LUZE

It was your father!

MARUSSA

My father?

LUZE

Yes ... he took me to work

there in his pastures,

so that I'm more on my own

and don't go to Prostimo

for herbs and flowers!

I work and I sing

all day long

while tending the flocks.

I'm happy!

However, this morning

I fled in secret.

It's your wedding day,

and I've come to offer you

a little gift from Luze.

Then through the courtyard,

and without being seen,

(she indicates the side door)

I'll go back ...

I've seen you ...

Farewell!

MARUSSA

No, don't leave me!

I have a favor to ask of you.

LUZE

Speak!

MARUSSA

This is the last day

di libera mia vita ...
D'altri sarò fra poco!
D'altri cosa divengo!
La libertà è finita!
(accennando verso la stanza, nel fondo)
Ascoso in sacro loco, là,
a quel umile altare
un picciol dono tengo
ch'io devo ritornare.

LUZE *(sorpresa)*
Un dono?

MARUSSA
Attendi! *(Aprè guardinga l'uscio)*

LUZE
Un dono?

MARUSSA
Di Lorenzo!

LUZE
Un dono di Lorenzo?
Un orecchino?

MARUSSA
Sì, un orecchino d'or!
Or come sai?

LUZE
Lorenzo il riebbe già!
Non ti ricordi?
Di', non ricordi più?
Me l'ha recato Biagio ...
e a Lorenzo l'ho portato
io stessa ed ei m'ha ritornato ...

of my life as a free woman ...
In a little while life will change for me!
I'll experience something quite different!
My freedom is gone!
(Pointing toward the room, in the back)
Hidden in a sacred place, there,
on that humble altar
I have a little gift
that I should return.

LUZE *(surprised)*
A gift?

MARUSSA
Wait! *She slowly opens the door.*

LUZE
A gift?

MARUSSA
From Lorenzo!

LUZE
A gift from Lorenzo?
An earring?

MARUSSA
Yes, a gold earring!
But how do you know?

LUZE
Lorenzo already has it back!
Don't you remember?
Say, don't you remember?
Biagio handed it to me ...
and I took it to Lorenzo,
I myself, and he returned to me ...

(Marussa si fa tutta bianca. Vorrebbe parlare ma l'affanno è in lei così forte che non può aprir bocca. Tutta tremante e nello stesso tempo agitata, essa piglia una sedia corre all'altare, e prendendo fra le mani la statuetta della Madonna, vi cerca l'orecchino che non trova. Allora rimette la statuetta a suo posto vi rientra)

MARUSSA

Ah, fui tradita!

(Dapprima rimane come attonita, poi scoppia in un dirotto pianto. Luze corre a lei. Marussa si abbandona commossa nelle sue braccia. Ad un tratto essa, si scuote e chiude l'uscio a chiave)

MARUSSA (sottovoce)

Luze, m'ascolta!

È dio che t'ha mandata!

Comprendi?

Io fui tradita e la dolcezza

dell'amor fu pianto per me che

non sognai altro che Amor!

LUZE

Il sogno della vita

per noi fu ricamato

con tristezza infinita

dalle più oscure stelle!

Vedi, Marussa, an'chio che tanto t'amo,

contro di te fui mano del destin.

MARUSSA

Luze, sorella mia,

prima che il core dal destin sia franto

(Marussa turns completely white. She would like to speak, but the affliction she feels is so great that she is unable to open her mouth. Trembling all over and at the same time agitated, she grabs a chair and runs to the altar, and taking the statuette of the Madonna in her hands she looks for the earring but does not find it. She then puts the statuette back in its place and comes back in.)

MARUSSA

Ah, I was betrayed!

(At first she is as if astonished, but then she bursts into a flood of tears. Luze runs to her. Marussa, moved, falls into her arms. She then suddenly gets up and locks the door.)

MARUSSA (sotto voce)

Luze, listen to me!

It's God who has sent you to me!

Do you understand?

I was betrayed, and love's sweetness

was for me a lament,

though I dreamed of nothing but love!

LUZE

For us life's dream

was covered over

with infinite sadness

from the darkest stars!

See, Marussa, I too, who love you so much,

was fate's hand against you.

MARUSSA

Luze, my little dear,

before this heart is broken by fate,

prima che il mio destin compia la via,
aiuta mi chio viva nel mio sogno
che vivendo sognai soltanto Amor!

LUZE

No, tu non chiedi invano aiuto a me
che vivo nel dolor!

MARUSSA

Aiutami ch'io viva nel mio sogno ...

LUZE

Tu che per me fosti pietosa e buona ...

MARUSSA

... io che vivendo sognai che amor.

LUZE

... chedimi il cuore e ti daró il amor.

MARUSSA

Taci!
Qualcun sale le scale!
Taci!

(Le due donne rimangono mute)

NICOLA *(di dentro, della porta nel fondo,
picchia)*

Marussa bella!

MARUSSA

Chi è?

NICOLA

Nicola sono!

before my fate runs its course,
help me to live in my dream,
for in life I dream of love alone!

LUZE

No, you don't ask in vain for help from me,
for I too live in grief!

MARUSSA

Help me to live in my dream.

LUZE

You who were so kind and good to me ...

MARUSSA

... I who in life dreamed that love ...

LUZE

... ask my heart, and I'll give you love.

MARUSSA

Be quiet!
Somebody is coming up the stairs!
Be quiet!

(The two women remain silent.)

NICOLA *(from inside the door in the back,
knocks)*

Beautiful Marussa!

MARUSSA

Who is it?

NICOLA

It's Nicola!

MARUSSA

Mi vesto!

NICOLA

Gli invitati giù vi aspettano
e sopra tutti io v'aspetto,
o amore!

*(si sentono le voci anche di Biagio e Menico e
insieme dalle stanze di sotto, voci di invitati:)*
Marussa bella!

MARUSSA

Vanne a Lorenzo, Luze!

LUZE

Tosto!

MARUSSA

E digli
»Vien, Marussa ti vuole!«

LUZE

Gli dirò!

MARUSSA

...e cautamente
qui lo guida ...
*(accenna alla porta per la quale è entrata
la Luze)*

LUZE

Sì.

MARUSSA

... per quella via

MARUSSA

I'm getting dressed!

NICOLA

The guests are waiting for you downstairs,
and above all I'm waiting for you.
O love!

(

*The voices of Biagio and Menico are also heard
and at the same time the voices of the guests from
the rooms downstairs:)*
Beautiful Marussa!

MARUSSA

Go to Lorenzo, Luze!

LUZE

At once!

MARUSSA

And tell him:
"Come, Marussa wants you!"

LUZE

I'll tell him!

MARUSSA

... and with caution
guide him here ...
*(She motions toward the door through which Luze
entered.)*

LUZE

Yes.

MARUSSA

... by that route

che t'ha menata a me.
(Luze esce)

SCENA SECONDA

MARUSSA

Qual presagio funesto ad un tratto
m'assale e l'anima mi turba e mi sgomenta.

Lorenzo forse non m'ama piu!

Egli qui non verra?

Questo e il pensier che mi martella il cuore e
m'in paura.

Ah! No! Luze! L'inganno gli dirá e qui con lei
verrá.

Io gli diro Lorenzo, oh mio Lorenzo,
fummo ingannati ma in cor suo Marussa
sempre ti amava,

Sempre, e t'ama ancora.

E Nicola? Che dir potro a Nicola.

Che dir!

Lorenzo ei odia e Dio sa qual vendetta di noi
del nostro amore far vorra.

(Si rifugia sotto l'immagine della Madonna)

Ah che visione e questa?

Chi ci salva?

Oh madre immacolata, Madonna benedetta,
di questa poveretta muoviti a pietá.

L'affranta anima mia conforta o madre pia.

E gia con dolce tregua ne l'umile preghiera
che a te s'innalza e spera l'angoscia mia crudel
al raggio si dilegua che mi giunge dal ciel!

that led you to me.
(Luze exits.)

SECOND SCENE

MARUSSA

What a gloomy sense of doom suddenly assails me
and disturbs my mind and unsettles me.

Perhaps Lorenzo doesn't love me anymore.

He won't come here?

This is the thought that hammers my heart and
frightens me.

Ah! No! Luze! She'll tell him how we were de-
ceived, and he'll come with her.

I'll tell him, Lorenzo, oh my Lorenzo,
we were deceived, but in her heart Marussa always
loved you,

always, and she still loves you.

And Nicola? What can I tell Nicola.

What can I tell him!

Lorenzo hates him, and God knows what revenge
he'll want to take for us for our love.

*(She finds refuge under the image of the
Madonna.)*

Ah, what vision is this?

Who will save us?

Oh, Immaculate Mother, Blessed Madonna,
be moved to feel pity for this poverty. Comfort my
broken spirit, O gracious Mother. And now with a
sweet truce, while this humble prayer rises up to
you and hopes, my cruel anxiety is dissipated by
the beam that comes to me from heaven!

SCENA TERZA

8 NICOLA (*di fuori*)
Marussa a che ti attardi?
Presto, fanciulla mia,
che si fa tardi!

(Marussa rapidamente si spettina, togliendosi febbrilmente il conciero; i capelli le cadono disordinatamente sulle spalle e così va con calma ad aprir l'uscio di fondo, in apparenza sorridente)

MARUSSA (*a Nicola e a Biagio che irrompono nella Stanza*)
Sto tutta spettinata!

NICOLA (*sorpreso di non vederla ancora vestita*)
Ancora!

BIAGIO (*a Nicola*)
Pazienza!
Ah questi sposi!

NICOLA
E in chiesa aspettano!

BIAGIO (*crolle le spalle*)
Via venite!
Lasciatela vestire!
Giù intanto
canteremo la villotta.

NICOLA
Marussa bella,
appena siete pronta,

THIRD SCENE

8 NICOLA (*from outside*)
Marussa, why do you delay?
Quick, my girl,
for it's getting late!

(Marussa rapidly puts herself in disorder, feverishly undoing her headdress; her hair falls down in disorder over her shoulders, and it is like this that she calmly goes to open the back door, smiling all over.)

MARUSSA (*to Nicola and to Biagio, who rush into the room*)
I'm all in disarray!

NICOLA (*surprised to see that she has not yet dressed*)
Still?

BIAGIO (*to Nicola*)
Be patient!
Ah, these couples!

NICOLA
And they're waiting in church!

BIAGIO (*shrugs his shoulders*)
Go!
Let her dress!
In the meantime we'll sing
a villotta downstairs.

NICOLA
Beautiful Marussa,
as soon as you're ready,

chiamatemi!
Io primo vo' vedervi!
Mi chiamerete? Or su andiam.
(lottando contro Biagio che crca di trascinarlo via)

MARUSSA
Sì, vi chiamerò!

(Biagio trascina via Nicola. Marussa chiude l'uscio, poco dopo entra Luze dall'altro uscio)

SCENA QUARTA

[9] LUZE
Ecco, Lorenzo è qui! Vi lascio. Addio!

(Marrissa accòrre – entra Lorenzo – Marussa abbraccia la Luze e la bacia. – Luze commossa le restituisce il bacio ed esce)

MARUSSA
Lorenzo, l'orecchino
che mi hai dato,
siccome un sacro voto,
avevo ascoso a quell'altare,
a piè della Madonna.
L'han di là rubato,
poi, con menzogna e il tutto han calpestato!
Ma la bugia in
quest'ora Iddio sbugiarda.
Marussa tua credeasi
abbandonata dal suo, Lorenzo!
Eppur non ha cessato
d'amarti mai!
Marussa t'ama sempre!

call me!
I want to be the first to see you!
Will you call me? Then we'll come up.
(He grapples with Biagio, who is trying to drag him away.)

MARUSSA
Yes, I'll call you!

(Biagio drags Nicola away. Marussa closes the door. A little while later Luze enters through the other door.)

FOURTH SCENE

[9] LUZE
Look, Lorenzo is here! I'll leave you. Farewell!

(Marussa runs – Lorenzo enters – Marussa embraces Luze and kisses her. Luze is moved, returns the kiss, and exits.)

MARUSSA
Lorenzo, the little earring
that you gave me,
as a sacred vow,
I hid in that altar
by the Madonna.
They robbed it from there,
using deceit, and ruined everything!
But this very moment
God has revealed the lie.
Your Marussa believed
that she had been forsaken by her Lorenzo!
But I never stopped
loving you!
Marussa still loves you!

LORENZO (*che dapprima capo, a poco a poco è passato dalla sorpresa é dall'ira alla calma, guarda con tristezza Marussa – poi:*)
Guarda, Marussa!
Era per me e per te!
(*leva un coltello*)

MARUSSA
O mio Lorenzo.
(*si guardano muti*)

LORENZO
Quanto abbiám sofferto!
MARUSSA
E quante lagrime!

LORENZO
Tuo padre è stato?

MARUSSA
E fu crudele!

LORENZO
E Nicola?

MARUSSA
Non so!

LORENZO (*con impeto e con un gesto violento di minaccia*)
Sì, per averti sua!

MARUSSA
Non so!

LORENZO
È così!

LORENZO (*at first in the dark, little by little has passed from surprise and from anger to calm, and looks at Marussa with sadness – then:*)
Look, Marussa!
It was for me and for you!
(*He is carrying a knife.*)

MARUSSA
O my Lorenzo.
(*They look at each other in silence.*)

LORENZO
How much we've suffered!
MARUSSA
And how many tears!

LORENZO
Your father was?

MARUSSA
And he was cruel!

LORENZO
And Nicola?

MARUSSA
I don't know!

LORENZO (*with force and with a violent, threatening gesture*)
Yes, to have you as his own!

MARUSSA
I don't know!

LORENZO
That's how it is!

MARUSSA

Non torturarti, deh,
con mal pensiero!
Dimmi che dobbiam far?
Già l'ora della chiesa si avvicina ...
(Lorenzo rimane muto)
Fuggire?

LORENZO

Sì.

MARUSSA

Dove?

LORENZO

Non so!

MARUSSA

Io ti seguo dovunque
dove vorrai!

LORENZO

Io non voglio fuggire contro l'inganno,
io sogno la vendetta!

MARUSSA

No, solo amore
il tuo pensiero sia!
Fuggiam, fuggiamo!
Fuggiam lontano
lungi dall'odio umano.
Fuggiam la casa mia
dove alberga il dolore.
Tu mi terrai
stretta al tuo petto
ed io al mio cuor
ti terrò stretto, stretto.
Così abbracciati

MARUSSA

Don't torture yourself, please,
with bad thoughts!
Tell me, what should we do?
The hour to go to church is coming ...
(Lorenzo stays silent.)
Flee?

LORENZO

Yes.

MARUSSA

Where?

LORENZO

I don't know!

MARUSSA

I'll follow you
wherever you want!

LORENZO

I don't want to flee from deceit;
I dream of revenge!

MARUSSA

No, let love alone
be in your thoughts!
Let's flee, let's flee!
Let's flee far away,
far from human hate.
Let's flee from my house,
where grief resides.
You'll take me
into your embrace,
and I'll hold you
tight, tight, to my heart.
In this embrace

avremo patria al mondo;
avremo casa il cielo,
nell'immenso desio
talamo i prati
e a difesa del nostro amore iddio!

LORENZO

Io non vedo la pace
io sento l'odio!
Perché fuggire?
E' sì bella Dignano ...
e così bello è amare
sotto il cielo natio.

MARUSSA

Ameremo lontano
sotto gli occhi di Dio,
pensando al nostro cielo,
languenti di desio!

LORENZO

Perche un inganno vile
fu teso al nostro cuore,
dovrem fuggir lontano
verso un ignoto ciel?
Marussa, se fuggiam
tutto sioscura,
colpa divien l'amore
per tutti quelli cui sorride in core
la vergogna degli altri che piangono per
l'angoscia del dolor!

MARUSSA

Che vuoi tu fare?

LORENZO

Chiama Nicola e tutto a lui gli svela.

we'll have the world as our fatherland,
we'll have the sky as our house,
in our immense desire
the meadow as our bedchamber,
and God as the defender of our love!

LORENZO

I don't see peace,
I feel hate!
Why flee?
Dignano is so pretty ...
and it's so fine to be in love
under one's native skies.

MARUSSA

We'll love far away
under God's eyes,
thinking of our skies,
languishing with desire!

LORENZO

Because vile deceit
was perpetrated against our hearts,
we should flee far away
to unknown skies?
Marussa, if we flee,
everything will darken;
love is made to blame,
for all those who smile in the heart
the shame of others who lament
for the anxiety of grief!

MARUSSA

What do you want to do?

LORENZO

Call Nicola and reveal everything to him.

MARUSSA

Questa è la via!

LORENZO

Io qui m'ascondo e tutto ascolterò.

Nicola è un uom che ha cuore

Sarai libera ancora
e libero il tuo amore
darai a chi t'adora!

MARUSSA

Ah, t'ha ispirato iddio, anima mia!

*(Marussa va ad aprire l'uscio di .fondo,
e chiama)*

Nicola!

(Lorenzo nasconde dietro alla tenda)

NICOLA *(di dentro)*

O mia Marussa!

MARUSSA

Su, venite!

*(Ritta, immobile, gli occhi all'uscio di fondo,
sta essa ad aspettare Nicola, lo sguardo pieno
di energia e risolutezza)*

SCENA QUINTA

Nicola entra con grande slancio, ma veduta
Marussa si ferma sorpreso.

10 NICOLA

Marussa,
ancora non siete abbigliata?

MARUSSA

That's the way!

LORENZO

I'll hide here and listen to everything.

Nicola is a man who has a heart.

You'll be free,
and your love will be free
for you to give to the one who adores you!

MARUSSA

Ah, God has inspired you, my life!

*(She goes to open the door in the back
and calls:)*

Nicola!

(Lorenzo hides behind the drapery.)

NICOLA *(from within)*

O my Marussa!

MARUSSA

Up, come!

*(Erect, without moving, her eyes fixed on the back
door, she stands waiting for Nicola, her eyes filled
with energy and resolve.)*

FIFTH SCENE

Nicola enters with great energy, but when he sees
Marussa, he stops in surprise.

10 NICOLA

Marussa,
you're still not dressed?

MARUSSA

Venite qui Nicola.

E d'uo'po ch'io vi parli e che voi
m'ascoltiate.

(Nicola va a chiudere l'uscio, Marussa va a letto e ne stacca dalla parete l'immagine di un crocifisso – accende due candele e ve le pone a lato sul tavolino)

Sovra codesta immagine
giuratemi, Nicola,
che voi risponderete
a quanto chiedo!

NICOLA

Lo giuro.

MARUSSA

Sulla vita,
che voi direte il vero!

NICOLA

No sulla vita!
È ancora poca cosa!
Io giuro sul mio amore!

(Stende la mano e giura)

MARUSSA

Quando m'avete
a moglie dimandata,
ditemi, sapevate
che con altri amoreggiavo
ed eromi impegnata?

MARUSSA

Come here, Nicola.

I need to talk to you,
and you need to listen to me.

(Nicola goes to close the door. Marussa goes to the bed and takes the image of a crucifix from the wall, lights two candles, and puts them to the side on the little table.)

On this modest image
swear to me, Nicola,
that you'll answer
everything I ask you!

NICOLA

I swear it.

MARUSSA

On your life
that you'll tell the truth!

NICOLA

Not on my life!
It's too little a thing!
I swear by my love!

(He extends his hand and swears.)

MARUSSA

When you asked for me
to be your wife,
tell me, did you know
that I was in love with another man
and was pledged to him?

NICOLA

Sì, lo sapevo ...
ed era il cruccio mio!
Mi torturavo tutto il dì,
e la notte tutta piangevo
e bestemmiavo iddio!

MARUSSA

E come avvenne, ditemi,
Nicola, ch'io allor troncassi tutto
con Lorenzo e a un tratto
vi donassi mia parola?

NICOLA

Biagio mi disse che Lorenzo
aveva un altro amore ...
e voi per l'oro solo
e a scopo della dote
vi teneva.

MARUSSA

Or bene hanno mentito!
Egli mi amava,
ed era riamato ...
E, come Dio mi vede,
con inganno
a voi m'hanno gittata
senza amore!
(si getta ai piedi di Nicola)
Pe' i morti vostri
e la vostra pietà ...
per l'amor che voi dite
mi portate,
Nicola, la parola mia rendete!
Deh, ridonate a me la libertà!

NICOLA

Yes, I knew ...
and it was my agony!
And I lived in torment all day,
and I lamented all night,
and I cursed God!

MARUSSA

And how did it happen, tell me,
Nicola, that I then broke off everything
with Lorenzo and all of a sudden
gave you my word?

NICOLA

Biagio told me
that Lorenzo had another love ...
and wanted you alone for the money
and was courting you
with the dowry in mind.

MARUSSA

Well, they indeed did lie!
He loved me,
and his love was returned ...
And, may God be my witness,
with deceit
they threw me to you
without love!
(She throws herself at Nicola's feet.)
By your departed ancestors
and by your kindness ...
by the love you say
that you have for me,
Nicola, give me back my word!
Come, give me back to freedom!

NICOLA

Voi m'uccidete!
Ah la crudel sentenza
della mia morte
esce dal labbro vostro!
Tutta la vita mia
per questo giorno ...
Sol per quell'ora
tanto desiata ...
per quell'amor che
tante lacrime, torture
e notti insonni m'è costato ...
e allor ch'io già le braccia apro
all'amore egli mi sfugge
ed è menzogna orrenda!

(Si sente il violino di Biagio e le voci degli invitati che cantano la Villotta)

(Marussa e Nicola rimangono angosciosamente sospesi)

NICOLA

Sentite?

MARUSSA

Ebben, Nicola?

NICOLA

Marussa!

SOPRANI E ALTI.

E dicono che quest'oggi si disposa
il fior della giunchiglia con la rosa ...

MARUSSA

Ma basta una parola!

NICOLA

You're killing me!
Ah, the cruel sentence
of my death
issues forth from your lips!
All my life
for this day ...
alone for that hour
so very much desired ...
for that love
that has cost me
so many tears, torments, and sleepless nights ...
and then when I'm opening my arms
to love, it flees from me,
and is a horrible lie!

(Biagio's violin is heard as well as the voices of the guests who are singing the villotta.)

(Marussa and Nicola remain in anxious suspension.)

NICOLA

Do you hear it?

MARUSSA

Well, Nicola?

NICOLA

Marussa!

SOPRANOS AND ALTOS

And they say that on this day
the jonquil flower is marrying the rose.

MARUSSA

I need only one word!

NICOLA

No, Marussa!

Non voglio esser di scherno
a tutti quelli che m'hanno invidiato!

SOPRANI E ALTI

Che si marita dicon tutt' intorno.

MARUSSA

Deh! Non siate crudele!

Lasciate mi all'amore di Lorenzo,
e il mio Lorenzo all'amor mio lasciate!

NICOLA

Lorenzo, voi mi dite?

L'odio di lui m'accieca!
E giuro!

MARUSSA

No! Non giurate,
con le mani giunte vi prego!

NICOLA

No, Marussa, non pregate,
Lorenzo non puo togliervi al mio cuore!

MARUSSA

Vi commuovan le guancie impallidite
e i dolorosi occhi di pianto e tutta me che
imploro pel mio amore.

LORENZO (*balzando risoluto e minaccioso
fuori dalla tenda*)

Così si prega solo il nostro Iddio!

MARUSSA

Lorenzo!

NICOLA

No, Marussa!

I don't want to be the laughingstock
of all those who've envied me!

SOPRANOS AND ALTOS

All around people are talking of marriage.

MARUSSA

Come on! Don't be cruel!

Let me be free for Lorenzo's love,
and let my Lorenzo be free for my love!

NICOLA

Lorenzo, you tell me?

My hatred for him drives me blind!
And I swear!

MARUSSA

No! Don't swear;
with my hands joined together I beg you!

NICOLA

No, Marussa, don't beg;
Lorenzo can't take you from my heart!

MARUSSA

May these pallid cheeks move you
and these dolorous eyes of lament
and my whole being when I implore you by my love.

LORENZO (*resolutely and threateningly jumping
out from behind the drapery*)

These are the wishes of our God alone!

MARUSSA

Lorenzo!

NICOLA
Tu spiavi!

LORENZO (*traendo il coltello*)
Io no ... il mio ferro ti spiava il core!

MARUSSA
Lorenzo mio! Nicola!

NICOLA (*avventandosi furiosamente e cacciando il coltello nel petto di Lorenzo che stramazza al suolo*)
E il mio lo trovagia.

MARUSSA (*correndo terrorizzata verso la porta*)
Aiuto per pieta assassino, aiuto!

NICOLA
Per te, bella Marussa!
(*fugge dalla porta di sinistra*)

MARUSSA (*come pazzo correndo a Lorenzo ed inginocchiandosegli appresso*)
Lorenzo! Anima mia.

VOCI
Madonna Santa!
Che avvenne mai?
Del sangue ... Morto!
Santo Dio, pietà!

BIAGIO (*severamente a Menico*)
Guardate! Il constrinse
la vostra crudeltà!

MENICO (*spaurito e tremante*)
Marussa ... Figlia mia ...

NICOLA
You were listening!

LORENZO (*taking out the knife*)
Me, no ... my knife was listening to your heart!

MARUSSA
My Lorenzo! Nicola!

NICOLA (*furiously hurling himself and thrusting the knife into Lorenzo's chest; Lorenzo falls to the ground.*)
And now mine has found yours.

MARUSSA (*running in horror toward the door*)
Help, please, a murderer, help!

NICOLA
For you, beautiful Marussa!
(*He exits through the door on the left.*)

MARUSSA (*like a madwoman, runs to Lorenzo and kneels beside him*)
Lorenzo! My life.

VOICES
Santa Madonna!
What's happened?
There's blood ... He's dead!
Santo Dio, have mercy!

BIAGIO (*severely, to Menico*)
Look! Your cruelty
has cut him down!

MENICO (*frightened and trembling*)
Marussa ... My daughter ...

MARUSSA (*volgendosi aspramente*)

No! Non mi dite Figlia

voi che il sangue voleste di Lorenzo e del mio core!

(ripiegandosi su Lorenzo)

VOCI

Nozze di sangue!

Orrende nozze!

MARUSSA

Lorenzo, anima mia,

vedi, ti son vicina.

Non senti le mie mani?

(e vedendo che gli sfugge esanime dalle braccia urla disperata:)

Oh! Maledetti!

MARUSSA (*bitterly turning around*)

No! Don't call me your daughter,

you who wanted Lorenzo's blood and my heart's blood!

(She again leans over Lorenzo.)

VOICES

Blood wedding!

Horrible wedding!

MARUSSA

Lorenzo, my life,

look, I'm near you.

You don't feel my hands?

(Seeing that he is falling lifelessly from her arms, she howls in despair:)

Oh! You cursed men!



Rijeka Opera Chorus



Anamarija Knego

cpo 555 686-2

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