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Puccini Romance

ANTOINETTE HALLORAN
ROSARIO LA SPINA



THE QUEENSLAND ORCHESTRA • STEPHEN MOULD

Puccini Romance

LA BOHÈME

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| 1 | O soave fanciulla (O lovely maiden) | 3'36 |
| 2 | Che gelida manina (Your little hand is frozen) | 4'30 |
| 3 | Sì, mi chiamano Mimi (Yes, they call me Mimi) | 4'28 |
| 4 | Donde lieta usci (Having come gladly at your call) | 3'02 |

TOSCA

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| 5 | Recondita armonia (Hidden harmony) | 2'41 |
| 6 | E lucevan le stelle (And the stars were shining) | 2'52 |
| 7 | Ah, quegli occhi! (Ah, those eyes!) | 5'27 |

LE VILLI (THE WILLIS)

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 8 | Se come voi piccina (If I were as small as you) | 5'03 |
|---|---|------|

LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST (THE GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST)

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| 9 | Ch'ella mi creda libero e lontano (Let her think me far away and free) | 1'58 |
|---|--|------|

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|------|
| 10 | Crisantemi (Chrysanthemums) | 7'10 |
|----|-----------------------------|------|

LA RONDINE (THE SWALLOW)

- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 11 | Chi il bel sogno di Doretta (Doretta's Dream) | 3'00 |
|----|---|------|

TURANDOT

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|------|
| 12 | Nessun dorma (No-one shall sleep) | 2'55 |
|----|-----------------------------------|------|

MADAMA BUTTERFLY

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------|------|
| 13 | Un bel di (One fine day) | 4'13 |
|----|--------------------------|------|

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|-------|
| 14 | Viene la sera (Night is coming) | 13'19 |
|----|---------------------------------|-------|

Total Playing Time 65'47

Antoinette Halloran *soprano*
Rosario La Spina *tenor*
The Queensland Orchestra
Stephen Mould *conductor*

The achievement of Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) is staggering. It is remarkable enough that today, of his twelve operas, four are among the most popular of all time, while another five are very close behind: no other composer has had such consistent and extraordinary success over such a period. What is truly extraordinary, though, is that he emerged in a period absolutely dominated by the figure of Giuseppe Verdi, who for many people was the embodiment of Italian Opera. As Verdi apparently moved into semi-retirement in the 1870s, the search for a successor was intense, especially from Verdi's publisher Ricordi, whose undoubted artistic aims were complemented by a strong financial interest. The fact that Verdi emerged from his retirement twice to present the world with two of his absolute masterpieces – *Otello* (1887) and *Falstaff* (1893) – did not make the life of the younger generation any easier.

Verdi's operas were however of an older school. Their musical traditions harked back to the *bel canto* era with conventional structures and stories taken from plays and novels that we would consider to belong to a rather melodramatic school. Tragic opera happened where everyday events left off. Verdi's audiences wanted the operas set in exotic places and times, and the characters to be larger than life – and accordingly some of his greatest figures include a king of ancient Babylon, a Renaissance court jester, several Spanish noblewomen, a medieval troubadour, an Ethiopian princess, a

king of Sweden and so on and so forth. They have passions rather than emotions and destinies rather than lives. The other important thing about these characters is that they have no life apart from the drama you're watching. It drives everything – you'll never know much about a Verdi character except what you find out by watching what happens to them, so what you usually find out is how they react to stress and tragedy. It makes for very powerful and grand opera, but it also makes the characters larger than life, sometimes almost monumental. Puccini's characters, by contrast, are on a very human and personal scale; and it is easy to imagine almost any one of them in their day-to-day life, making the emotional connection to the audience a very immediate one.

Part of the reason for this is that when Puccini started writing, there had been a fundamental shift in how theatre and opera were being written. Figures such as Emile Zola and Henrik Ibsen had helped to make everyday people a fit subject for the theatre, while a more popular version of this trend, called *verismo* in Italy, sprang up in theatre and opera. Its subjects were the peasants, the shopkeepers, the soldiers, the seamstresses. People who in Verdi's operas would only have been fit to populate a chorus now came forward to tell their own stories.

Puccini's early work charts this change in miniature. Very early on, he realised that his

main talent was for opera, and he concentrated on it almost from the beginning. Despite that, he wrote a number of non-operatic works, some of them very fine, like **Crisantemi** (Chrysanthemums), an elegy for string quartet which he wrote in memory of the Duke of Savoy in 1880 – allegedly in a single night. It was opera which was to bring him success, though. His first, *Le Villi*, was written in 1882 for a competition run by the publisher Sonzogno, who was no doubt hoping to find someone as profitable for them as Verdi was for Ricordi. It is based on the same story as the ballet *Giselle*: Roberto and Anna are about to be married but shortly before the wedding he is enchanted by a siren and forgets her. Anna dies, and her ghost lures Roberto into the forest where she and the other spirits (the *villi* or Willis of the title) have him dance until he dies from exhaustion. The plot (which Puccini did not choose) is of the old school, and Puccini's attempt to come to grips with it helps explain why the opera did not win the competition; but Anna's aria **Se come voi piccina**, in which she sings of her love for Roberto, is probably the first aria which shows what gifts Puccini had. It also indirectly helps explain why Ricordi, not Sonzogno, were the most successful Italian publishing house: it was Ricordi who contacted Puccini after hearing the work, and Ricordi who commissioned another opera from him. That opera, *Edgar*, was not successful, despite Puccini producing numerous revisions. Ricordi kept faith in him, though, and

his next effort, *Manon Lescaut*, was to be the breakthrough. It also began what was to be a lifelong collaboration with his librettists Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica.

By the time Puccini came to write *La bohème* in 1896, Verdi had finally and irrevocably retired, and Puccini was being hailed as his successor. *La bohème* sealed that title for him, but at the same time showed that he was a new, different generation of composer. It was an opera that Verdi could never have written. Its characters were poor artists and tradespeople, with the leading pair being Rodolfo the poet and Mimi the seamstress. The tragedy is a very simple one – Rodolfo and Mimi are in love, but she is dying of a combination of tuberculosis and poverty. As far as the heart of the plot goes, that's about all; but what makes *La bohème* so marvellous is that the tragedy really is the core of so much more. Unlike in Verdi, we spend time getting to know the characters and building up an affection for them, which makes what happens to them a much more personal matter than in a Verdi opera. Verdi's nearest equivalent was *La traviata*, which is a drama of personal renunciation and self-sacrifice. The dying Violetta in the last act of that opera will move you to feel pity and sympathy, but the death of Mimi in *La bohème* is like losing a friend. Watching *La bohème*, which bubbles with life and humour, you come to know not only Mimi and Rodolfo but their friends and acquaintances. You find out who they are, and about their quirks and foibles.

You feel that you've become a part of their lives, and they are part of yours; so that when tragedy strikes, it's personal in a way that it never was with Verdi.

Puccini created this effect with a seemingly effortless stream of light-hearted, conversational music. Characters sing about the things which people talk about; they joke, they gossip, they boast and quarrel. In short, they do all those things which connect people to each other, with music which wells up full of emotion and humour. The best-known music from the opera is probably at the end of the first act, where Rodolfo and Mimì meet (**Che gelida manina**). He introduces himself – he is a poet who lives on little but his imagination. Mimì hesitantly tells him a little about herself (**Si, mi chiamano Mimì**) and they realise that they are attracted to each other. Seamlessly the two arias merge into a love duet (**O soave fanciulla**) which in a few short minutes encapsulates all the joy of young love and also allows us to celebrate with them. It will make the tragedy all the more poignant. In the third act (**Donde lieta usci**) the couple know that Mimì is dying and that living with Rodolfo in poverty can only hasten it. Despite their love for each other they know they need to separate, but cannot bear to do so straight away.

After *La bohème* things took a darker turn. In *La bohème* Puccini's source material had been a French novel about life in the Latin Quarter; his next work, *Tosca*, was based on a play by

Victorien Sardou which was set in Rome during the Napoleonic wars. The central characters are the opera singer Floria Tosca and her lover, the painter Mario Cavaradossi, with the villain of the piece being the sadistic chief of police, Scarpia. As with *La bohème*, the opera launches straight into the action, as an escaped political prisoner rushes on to hide in a church where, as we shall shortly discover, Cavaradossi is painting a Madonna. When Cavaradossi arrives, he becomes lost in contemplation of the fact that although his painting and his lover do not resemble each other, the fact that they are both beautiful means that while painting he thinks only of his Tosca. The aria, **Recondita armonia** – 'obscure harmony of contrasts' – is what people must have been coming to think of as typical Puccini: on stage, the tenor's lyric outpourings are counterpointed by the grumbling of the sacristan. The prisoner, Angelotti, reveals himself to Cavaradossi, who promises to help him. Before Angelotti can get out, though, Tosca comes to call on her lover. Angelotti hides again and Cavaradossi is left with the difficult task of trying to persuade Tosca to go again without letting her think that he wants her to go – she is of a jealous disposition, and her mood is not helped by the fact that Cavaradossi's painting is based on a real woman whom he has observed praying in the church (**Ah, quegli occhi!**). The banter and quarrelling, the combination of affection and jealousy which comes across in this duet make these characters very much

living, breathing people. The tragedy which follows is unspeakable – Cavaradossi is arrested and tortured so Scarpia can find out the whereabouts of Angelotti. Tosca is told by Scarpia that the price of Cavaradossi's freedom is her body. Having agreed to the condition, Tosca watches as Scarpia tells his subordinate to prepare a mock execution for her lover so that suspicion will not be aroused. When Scarpia turns to claim Tosca, however, she stabs him with the only weapon she has found – a fruit knife. The last act begins with Cavaradossi's lament **E lucevan le stelle**, in which he remembers his first meeting with Tosca. She arrives and they celebrate their impending freedom – until the smoke clears from the firing squad and Tosca realises that the execution was for real. As Scarpia's body is discovered, she throws herself from the battlements. *Tosca* is an absolute no-holds-barred, gripping drama – bloody and unrelenting, with music which is perfectly paced to ratchet up the tension from beginning to end.

The best-loved of all Puccini's works, however, remains *Madama Butterfly*. The story was apparently based on a real incident in Nagasaki in the late 19th century, and the play on which the opera was based emerged out of a sort of popular and colourful offshoot from the realist movement – stories of realistic people in exotic places and situations. Captain Pinkerton of the US Navy diverts himself while on leave in Nagasaki by going through a wedding ceremony

with a young geisha known as Butterfly. She, though, takes it very seriously – in fact she has renounced her religion in order to marry him and is ostracised by her family. When Pinkerton leaves she is convinced he will return for her. Eventually he does return, but with his American wife in tow, and Butterfly does the only honourable thing her emotions allow her to do – she commends their child to Pinkerton's care and commits ritual suicide.

The character of Butterfly affected Puccini deeply – he felt his métier was the depiction of 'great griefs in small souls' and Butterfly, with her youth, fragility and vulnerability, is the embodiment of this condition. The duet **Viene la sera**, where Pinkerton and Butterfly are left alone for the first time after the wedding ceremony, is a rapturous moment which, as the opera progresses, will stand out in the memory as Butterfly's sole moment of happiness, and as the height of Pinkerton's tragic insouciance. The great aria in the opera, though, is Butterfly's **Un bel di**, usually translated as 'One fine day'. As her maid doubts that Pinkerton will ever return, Butterfly tries to reassure them both by conjuring up her vision of the day he comes back, showing us how everything in her life – her hopes, fears and future – have become bound with her love for him. It is a tremendously moving moment, not least because we in the audience can feel that the more she hopes, the greater will be her grief when her hopes are dashed, as they inevitably will be.

Ironically enough, given its later popularity, *Madama Butterfly* was a complete failure at its premiere at La Scala in Milan – although the failure had little to do with the quality of the opera itself and was probably more to do with resentment against Puccini and the management of the opera house for, among other things, having excluded the critics from the dress rehearsal they traditionally attended.

After Japan, Puccini took to another play by the author of *Madama Butterfly*, David Belasco. This work was set in a location which for Italians was quite as exotic as Japan – California during the Gold Rush. The unusual setting of *La fanciulla del West* becomes more understandable when considered in context. The work was commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the first time an American opera house was to host an internationally awaited premiere. The Americans, truth to tell, were a little puzzled to find themselves depicted as exotic; and the work has never had the popularity of Puccini's earlier ones. For a start, its strength does not lie in great arias, but in a seamless, integrated stream of music, which in its colour and complexity represents a new direction for Italian opera. Puccini was inspired by Debussy and the impressionists, and *La fanciulla del West* is musically dense and highly coloured. The story concerns the outlaw Dick Johnson – in love with the saloon owner Minnie – and the sheriff Jack Rance, who is pursuing Johnson. When in the final act Johnson is

arrested and about to be hanged, he sings the great aria **Ch'ella mi creda libero e lontano**, asking the crowd to let Minnie think that he has escaped and is far away. Unusually for a western, the girl turns up to rescue the boy, and unusually for Puccini, there is a happy ending and they do manage to ride off into the sunset. Maybe American optimism had touched a chord with Puccini.

Puccini's next work was not so much exotic as an unusual exercise for him. In 1913 he was approached by the opera in Vienna to write, of all things, an operetta. It was not remotely ready when war broke out the following year, and so the work, when it was finished, was finally performed in neutral Monte Carlo. *La Rondine*, ultimately, is not an operetta, but neither is it a fully blown tragic opera, and it has never quite achieved the stature of his other great works. Nevertheless it has wonderful moments, such as the set piece **Chi il bel sogno di Doretta** in which the leading character, Magda, teasingly completes a new song about a poor girl loved by a king, which another character, the poet Prunier, has commenced.

During the First World War Puccini worked on another opera for New York, or more precisely, three operas in one act each, which he called the *trittico*, or triptych. *Il trittico* contains his only comedy, *Gianni Schicchi*, which shows, more than anything else Puccini wrote, how masterly his sense of timing in music was. Puccini by this

stage was unsurpassable at knowing exactly what an audience's expectations would be at any given point, and at structuring his music to take advantage of this. Most of his great moments are created out of knowing what the audience is expecting or thinking, and then playing with that knowledge to create a tension or dramatic irony which drives the opera onwards.

Puccini's final work, *Turandot*, was unfinished at his death from throat cancer in 1924. It is set in a mythical China, with a fairytale plot of a prince who can only win a princess by answering her three riddles. When he does so and she still refuses to marry him, he tells her that if she can find out his name by dawn, she may execute him, as she has her other unsuccessful suitors. The third act opens with what has become Puccini's most famous aria: the princess Turandot has declared that no-one shall sleep (**Nessun dorma**) until the stranger's name has been discovered, but he is confident that he will triumph. When he confronts her and kisses her, she comes to realise that love is not weakness and that although he has won, she is stronger for it. He reveals his name to her – he is the prince Calaf – and she announces to the people of Peking that the stranger who has conquered her is: Love.

Turandot would appear at first sight to be a return to the old Verdian style of opera, with larger-than-life and unusual characters; but it is

actually something else again, and had Puccini lived, it might have represented a new direction for him. Musically it is a riot of colour and fascinating effects; and it is stylised in the way that it uses oriental motifs and characters drawn from *commedia dell'arte*. Rather than being a throwback, it is a brilliant creation in its own right, with driven, tense characters and a richly woven, sinister splendour. Its nearest literary equivalent today would be one of the darker sort of graphic novel, and it has the same bright and macabre fascination.

Above all else, Puccini understood something about the voice: like perhaps no other composer, Puccini was able to write an aria that spoke directly to the heart. He has been criticised for being sentimental, but actually he had an ability to create a melody which translated directly into an emotion. Singers can resist them to sing no more than an audience can to hear them, because Puccini understood voices and their power so well. He left behind a magnificent legacy: a group of operas which no-one can listen to and remain unmoved.

Antony Ernst

LA BOHÈME

Rodolfo:

1 O soave fanciulla,
o dolce viso di mite
circonfuso alba lunar,
in te, ravviso il sogno
ch'io vorrei sempre sognar!

Mimi:

Ah! tu sol comandi, amor!

Rodolfo:

Fremon già nell'anima
le dolcezze estreme,
nel bacio freme amor!

Mimi:

Oh! come dolci scendono
le sue lusinghe al core.
Tu sol comandi, amor!
No, per pietà!

Rodolfo:

Sei mia!

Mimi:

V'aspettan gli amici...

Rodolfo:

Già mi mandi via?

Mimi:

Vorrei dir...ma non oso...

Rodolfo:

Di'.

Mimi:

Se venissi con voi?

Rodolfo:

Che? Mimi!
Sarebbe così dolce restar qui.
C'è freddo fuori...

*O lovely girl,
O sweet, gentle face bathed in the light
of the rising moon,
in you I see the dream
I would dream forever!*

Ah! Love, you alone have the power to command!

*Already the uttermost sweetness
quivers in my soul,
love trembles in our kiss!*

*Oh! how sweetly his flattery
falls upon my heart...
Love, you alone have the power to command!
(Drawing away from him) No, I beg you!*

Be mine!

Your friends are waiting for you...

Are you sending me away already?

I would like to say...but I don't dare...

Tell me!

What if I came with you?

*What? Mimi!
It would be so nice to stay here.
It's cold outside...*

Mimi:

Vi starò vicina!

Rodolfo:

E al ritorno?

Mimi:

Curioso!

Rodolfo:

Dammi il braccio, mia piccina.

Mimi:

Obbedisco, signor!

Rodolfo:

Che m'ami di'.

Mimi:

Io t'amo!

Both:

Amor! Amor!

Rodolfo:

2 Che gelida manina,
se la lasci riscaldar.
Cercar che giova?
Al buio non si trova.
Ma per fortuna è una notte di luna,
e qui la luna l'abbiamo vicina.
Aspetti signorina,
le dirò con due parole
chi son e che faccio, come vivo.
Vuole?
Chi son? Sono un poeta.
Che cosa faccio? Scrivo.
E come vivo? Vivo.
In povertà mia lieta
scialo da gran signore
rime ed inni d'amore.
Per sogni e per chimere

I will stay by your side!

And when we come back?

Curious, aren't you?

Give me your arm, my little one...

I obey, sir!

Tell me you love me...

I love you!

Love! Love!



*Your little hand is frozen!
Let me warm it up for you.
What's the use in looking?
We'll never find the key in the dark.
But luckily the moon's shining tonight,
and here we have the moon as our neighbour.
Wait a little, young lady,
and I'll quickly tell you
who I am and what I do, how I live.
Shall I?
Who am I? I'm a poet.
What do I do? I write.
And how do I live? I live.
In my happy poverty
I squander, like a great lord,
poems and hymns of love.
In dreams and fancies*

e per castelli in aria
l'anima ho milionaria.
Talor dal mio forziere
ruban tutti i gioielli
due ladri: gli occhi belli.
V'entrar con voi pur ora,
ed i miei sogni usati
e i bei sogni miei
tosto si dileguar!
Ma il furto non m'accora
poichè, poichè v'ha preso stanza
la dolce speranza!
Or che mi conoscete,
parlate voi, deh! parlate.
Chi siete? Vi piaccia dir!

Mimi:

3

Si.
Mi chiamano Mimi,
ma il mio nome è Lucia.
La storia mia è breve.
A tela o a seta
ricamo in casa e fuori.
Son tranquilla e lieta
ed è mio svago far gigli e rose.
Mi piaccion quelle cose
che han sì dolce malia,
che parlano d'amor, di primavera,
che parlano di sogni e di chimere,
quelle cose che han nome poesia.
Lei m'intende?
Mi chiamano Mimi,
il perchè non so.
Sola, mi fo il pranzo da me stessa.
Non vado sempre a messa
ma prego assai il Signor.
Vivo sola, soletta,

*and castles in the air
I'm a millionaire in spirit.
Sometimes my strong-box
is robbed of all its jewels
by two thieves: two beautiful eyes.
They came in with you just now,
and my old familiar dreams,
my beautiful dreams
soon vanished.
But the theft hasn't broken my heart
because their place has been taken
by sweet hope!
Now that you know me,
it's your turn to speak. Tell me:
who are you? Will you tell me?*

Yes.
*They call me Mimi
but my name is Lucia.
There's not much to tell about me.
I do embroidery on cloth or silk
at home and outside.
I am calm and happy
and I amuse myself by making lilies and roses.
I like things
that have a gentle magic,
that speak of love, of spring,
that speak of dreams and fancies,
those things they call poetry.
Do you understand me?
They call me Mimi,
I don't know why.
I eat my dinner alone.
I don't often go to mass
but I pray to the Lord a great deal.
I live alone, all alone*

là in una bianca cameretta:
guardo sui tetti e in cielo,
ma quando vien lo sgelo
il primo sole è mio,
il primo bacio dell'aprile è mio!
Germoglia in un vaso una rosa.
Foglia a foglia la spio!
Così gentil il profumo d'un fior.
Ma i fior ch'io faccio, ahimè!
i fior ch'io faccio non hanno odore!
Altro di me non le saprei narrare:
sono la sua vicina
che la vien fuori d'ora a importunare.

Mimi:

4

Donde lieta uscì al tuo grido d'amore,
torna sola Mimi al solitario nido.
Ritorna un'altra volta a intesser finti fior!
Addio, senza rancor!
Ascolta, ascolta.
Le poche robe aduna
che lasciasti sparse.
Nel mio cassetto stan chiusi
quel cerchietto d'or,
e il libro di preghiere.
Involgi tutto quanto in un grembiale
e manderò il portiere...
Bada... sotto il guanciale c'è la cuffietta rosa.
Se vuoi, serbarla a ricordo d'amor!
Addio, addio, senza rancor!

Italian words by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa

*there in a little white room:
I look out over the roofs and up at the sky
but when the ice starts to melt
the first ray of sunshine belongs to me,
the first kiss of April is mine!
I have a rose blooming in a vase.
I watch it blossom, petal by petal.
A flower's perfume is so lovely.
But the flowers that I make, alas,
the flowers I make have no fragrance.
I don't know what else to say about myself:
I'm your neighbour,
coming to bother you at an inconvenient moment.*



*Having come out gladly at your call of love,
Mimi returns alone to her solitary nest.
She goes back to making her fake flowers.
Goodbye – with no hard feelings!
Listen, listen!
Gather up the few belongings
that I've left scattered around.
Locked in my little drawer
there's that gold bracelet
and my prayer book.
Wrap them up all together in an apron.
I'll send the concierge to fetch them...
Look, under my pillow is the pink bonnet.
Keep it, if you like, as a souvenir of our love!...
Goodbye, goodbye, with no hard feelings!*

TOSCA

Cavaradossi:

- 5 Recondita armonia di bellezze diverse!
È bruna Floria, l'ardente amante mia,
e te, beltade ignota,
cinta di chiome bionde!
Tu azzurro hai l'occhio,
Tosca ha l'occhio nero!
L'arte nel suo mistero
le diverse bellezze insiem confonde:
ma nel ritrar costei il mio solo pensiero,
ah! il mio sol pensier sei tu! Tosca sei tu!

Cavaradossi:

- 6 E lucevan le stelle...
ed olezzava la terra,
stridea l'uscio dell'orto...
e un passo sfiorava la rena...
Entrava ella, fragrante,
mi cadea fra le braccia...
Oh! dolci baci, o languide carezze,
mentr'io fremente
le belle forme disciogliea dai veli!
Svani per sempre il sogno mio d'amore...
L'ora è fuggita
e muoio disperato!
E non ho amato
mai tanto la vita!

Tosca:

- 7 Ah, quegli occhi!

Cavaradossi:

Qual occhio al mondo può star di paro
all'ardente occhio tuo nero?
È qui che l'esser mio s'affisa intero,

*Hidden harmony of differing beauties!
Floria, my passionate lover, has brown hair,
and you, unknown beauty,
are crowned with blond hair.
You have blue eyes,
Tosca's eyes are black!
Art in its mystery
blends the two different beauties into one:
but while I am painting her, my only thought,
ah, my only thought is of you! Of you, Tosca!*



*And the stars were shining...
and the earth smelt sweet,
the garden gate squeaked...
and a step brushed the sand...
She came in, fragrant,
she fell into my arms...
Oh, sweet kisses, languid caresses,
while I, trembling,
loosened her veil to reveal her lovely features!
My dream of love has vanished for ever,
the hour has fled
and I die in despair!
And never have I
loved life so much!*



Ah, those eyes!

*Are there any eyes in the whole world
that can match your burning dark eyes?
My whole being is fixed on them:*

Occhio all'amor soave, all'ira fiero.
Qual altro al mondo può star di paro
all'occhio tuo nero?

Tosca:

Oh, come la sai bene
l'arte di farti amare!
Ma falle gli occhi neri!

Cavaradossi:

Mia gelosa!

Tosca:

Sì, lo sento, ti tormento senza posa.

Cavaradossi:

Mia gelosa!

Tosca:

Certa sono del perdono
se tu guardi al mio dolor!

Cavaradossi:

Mia Tosca idolatrata,
ogni cosa in te mi piace;
l'ira audace e lo spasimo d'amor!

Tosca:

Dilla ancora la parola che consola...
dilla ancora!

Cavaradossi:

Mia vita, amante inquieta,
dirò sempre: 'Floria, t'amo!'
Ah! l'anima acquieta,
sempre 't'amo!' ti dirò!

Tosca:

Dio! quante peccata!
M'hai tutta spettinata!

Cavaradossi:

Or va, lasciami!

*eyes of gentle love, of fierce anger.
What other eyes in the whole world
could match your dark eyes?*

*Ah, you know all the tricks
to make someone love you!
But paint her eyes dark!*

My jealous lady!

Yes, I am, and I torment you ceaselessly.

My jealous lady!

*I am sure that you would forgive me
if you could see inside my suffering!*

*My adored Tosca,
I love everything about you:
your reckless anger and your ecstasies of love*

*Say those consoling words again...
Say them again!*

*My dearest, my anxious lover,
I will always say: 'Floria, I love you!'
Ah, put your soul at rest,
I will always tell you, 'I love you!'*

*Heavens! Such wicked behaviour!
You've completely messed up my hair!*

Now you must leave me.

Tosca:

Tu fino a stassera stai ferma al lavoro.
E mi prometti, sia caso o fortuna,
sia treccia bionda o bruna,
a pregar non verrà donna nessuna?

Cavaradossi:

Lo giuro, amore!
Va!

Tosca:

Quanto m'affretti!

Cavaradossi:

Ancora?

Tosca:

No, perdona!

Cavaradossi:

Davanti la Madonna?

Tosca:

È tanto buona!
Ma falle gli occhi neri!

Italian words by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa

LE VILLI**Anna:**

- 8 Se come voi piccina io fossi, o vaghi fior,
sempre vicina potrei stare al mio amor...
Allor dirgli vorrei:
Io penso sempre a te!
Ripeter gli potrei:
Non ti scordar di me!

Voi, di me più felici, lo seguirete, o fior;
Per valli e per pendici seguirete il mio amor.
Ah, si il nome che avete
menzognero non è,

*You stay here working until evening!
And will you promise me
that no woman, blonde or brunette,
even by chance, will come here to pray?*

*I swear it, my love!
Now go!*

You're in a hurry to be rid of me!

Not jealous again?

No, forgive me.

Before the Madonna?

*She is so good and virtuous!
But paint those eyes black!*

*If I were as small as you, pretty forget-me-nots,
I could always stay close to my love...
I'd like to tell him:
I am always thinking of you!
I could repeat it to him:
Don't forget me!*

*O flowers, happier than me, you will go with him;
you will follow my love over hill and dale.
Ah, if your name
is not a lie,*

deh! al mio amor ripetete:
Non ti scordar di me!

Italian words by Ferdinando Fontana

LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST**Johnson:**

- 9 Ch'ella me creda libero e lontano,
sopra una nuova via di redenzione!
Aspetterà ch'io torni!...
E passeranno i giorni,
ed io non tornerò...
Minnie, della mia vita mio solo fiore,
Minnie, che m'hai voluto tanto bene, ah!
Tu della mia vita mio solo fior!

Italian words by Guelfo Civinini and Carlo Zangarini

LA RONDINE**Magda:**

- 11 Chi il bel sogno di Doretta potè indovinar?
Il suo mister come mai finì?
Ahimè!
Un giorno uno studente in bocca la baciò
e fu quel bacio rivelazione:
Fu la passione!
Folle amore! Folle ebbrezza!
Chi la sottile carezza
d'un bacio così ardente mai ridir potrà?
Ah! mio sogno! Ah! mia vita!
Che importa la ricchezza
se alfin è rifiorita la felicità!
O sogno d'or poter amar così!

Italian words by Giuseppe Adami

*oh, say to my love again:
Don't forget me!*

*Let her think me far away and free,
set on a new path of redemption!
She'll wait for me to come back!...
And the days will pass,
and I shall not return...
Minnie, the one flower of my life,
Minnie, who loved me so well, ah!
You are the only flower of my life!*

*Who can guess Doretta's lovely dream?
How did the mysterious tale finish?
Alas!
One day a student kissed her on the mouth
and that kiss was a revelation:
it was passion!
Drunk on the wine of insane love!
Who could ever put into words
the subtle caress of such a burning kiss?
Ah! my dream! Ah! my beloved!
What do riches matter
if in the end happiness blooms again?
What a golden dream, to be able to love like that!*

TURANDOT

Calaf:

- 12 Nessun dorma! Nessun dorma!
Tu pure, o Principessa,
nella tua fredda stanza
guardi le stelle
che tremano d'amore e di speranza!
Ma il mio mistero è chiuso in me,
il nome mio nessun saprà!
No, no, sulla tua bocca lo dirò,
quando la luce splenderà!
Ed il mio bacio scioglierà il silenzio
che ti fa mia!
Dilegua, notte! tramontate, stelle!
All'alba vincerò!

Italian words by Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni

MADAMA BUTTERFLY

Butterfly:

- 13 Un bel di vedremo
levarsi un fil di fumo
sull'estremo confin del mare.
E poi la nave appare.
Poi la nave bianca
entra nel porto, romba
il suo saluto.
Vedi? E venuto!
Io non gli scendo incontro.
Io no. Mi metto là
sul ciglio del colle e aspetto,
e aspetto gran tempo
e non mi pesa,
la lunga attesa.
E uscito dalla folla cittadina
un uomo, un picciol punto,
s'avvia per la collina...

*No-one shall sleep! No-one shall sleep!
You too, Princess,
in your cold room
you gaze at the stars
which are trembling with love and hope!
But my secret is locked within me,
no-one shall know my name!
No, no, I will say it on your lips
when the light breaks forth in glory!
And my kiss will dissolve the silence
which makes you mine!
Let the night vanish! Let the stars set!
At dawn, I shall triumph!*

*One fine day we'll see
a wisp of smoke rising up
from over the farthest edge of the sea,
and then the ship will appear.
Then the white ship
will enter the harbour, will thunder
a salute.
You see? He's arrived!
I shall not go down to meet him.
No. I shall stand there
on the brow of the hill and wait,
and wait a long time,
and the long wait
will not be a burden to me.
And coming out from the city crowd
a man, a tiny speck,
will make his way up the hill.*

Chi sarà? Chi sarà?
E come sarà giunto –
Che dirà? Che dirà?
Chiamerà Butterfly dalla lontana.
Io senza dar risposta
me ne starò nascosta
un po' per celia...
e un po' per non morire
al primo incontro,
ed egli alquanto in pena
chiamerà, chiamerà:
Piccina mogliettina,
olezzo di verbena –
i nomi che mi dava
al suo venire.
Tutto questo avverrà,
te lo prometto.
Tienti la tua paura,
io con sicura fede l'aspetto.

Pinkerton:

- 14 Viene la sera...

Butterfly:

...e l'ombra e la quiete.

Pinkerton:

E sei qui sola...

Butterfly:

Sola e rinnegata!
Rinnegata e felice!

Pinkerton (to the servants):

A voi, chiudete!

Butterfly:

Sì, sì, noi tutti soli...
E fuori il mondo...

*Who is it? Who can it be?
And when he arrives –
What will he say?
He will call out from the distance: 'Butterfly!'
I will not answer
but will stay hidden,
partly to tease...
and partly so as not to die
at the first meeting.
A little worried,
he'll call out, he'll call:
'Dear little wife,
fragrant verbena' –
the names he used to call me
when he came here.
All this will happen,
I promise you.
Keep your fears:
I, in secure faith, shall wait for him.*



Night is coming...

...and the shadows and the calm.

And you are here alone...

*Alone and disowned!
Disowned and happy!*

You there, close the doors!

*Yes, yes, we're all alone here...
And outside, the world...*

Pinkerton:

E il Bonzo furibondo.

Butterfly:

Suzuki, le mie vesti.
Quest'obi pomposa di sciogliere mi tarda...
si vesta la sposa di puro candor.

Pinkerton:

Con moti di scojattolo
i nodi allenta e scioglie!
Pensar che quel giocattolo
è mia moglie!

Butterfly:

Tra motti sommessi
sorride e mi guarda.
Celarmi potessi! ne ho tanto rossor!

Pinkerton:

Ma tal grazia dispiega,
ch'io mi struggo
per la febbre d'un subito desio.

Butterfly:

E ancor l'irata voce mi maledice...
Butterfly rinnegata...
Rinnegata e felice...

Pinkerton:

Bimba dagli occhi pieni di malia,
ora sei tutta mia.
Sei tutta vestita di giglio.
Mi piace la treccia tua bruna
fra candidi veli.

Butterfly:

Somiglio la Dea della luna,
la piccola Dea della luna
che scende la notte dal ponte del ciel.

And your furious uncle, the Bonze.

*Suzuki, my robes.
I can't wait to get out of this stuffy obi...
a bride dresses in pure white.*

*She's like a squirrel,
the way she loosens and undoes the knots!
To think that this plaything
is my wife!*

*Talking softly to himself
he's smiling and watching me.
If only I could hide! I'm blushing so!*

*But such gracefulness
makes me burn
with a fever of sudden desire.*

*And still the angry voice curses me...
Butterfly disowned...
Disowned and happy...*

*Child with eyes full of enchantment,
now you are all mine.
You are all dressed in lily white.
I like the way your brown hair
peeps out from among the white veils.*

*I'm like the Goddess of the moon,
the little Goddess of the moon
who comes down at night from her sky-bridge.*

Pinkerton:

E affascina i cuori...

Butterfly:

E li prende
e li avvolge in un bianco mantel
E via se li reca
negli alti reami.

Pinkerton:

Ma intanto finor non m'hai detto,
ancor non m'hai detto che m'ami.
Le sa quella Dea le parole
che appagan gli ardenti desir?

Butterfly:

Le sa. Forse dirle non vuole
per tema d'averne a morir.

Pinkerton:

Stolta paura, l'amor non uccide,
ma dà vita
e sorride per gioie celestiali
come ora fa nei tuoi lunghi occhi ovali.

Butterfly:

Adesso voi siete per me
l'occhio del firmamento.
E mi piaceste dal primo momento
che vi ho veduto.
Siete alto, forte.
Ridetec con modi sì palesi
e dite cose che mai non intesi.
Or son contenta.
Vogliatemi bene, un bene piccolino,
un bene da bambino,
quale a me si conviene.
Vogliatemi bene.
Noi siamo gente avvezza
alle piccole cose umili e silenziose,

And enchants hearts...

*and takes them
and wraps them in a white mantel
and carries them away with her
into the kingdoms in the sky.*

*But meanwhile, you've never told me,
you still haven't told me that you love me.
Does the Goddess know the words
that satisfy burning desire?*

*She does. Perhaps she doesn't want to say them
for fear that she will die as she utters them.*

*Foolish fear! Love doesn't kill,
it gives life,
and smiles with the joys of heaven,
as it is smiling now in your almond eyes.*

*Now you are to me
the shining light of the heavens.
And I liked you from the first moment
I saw you.
You are tall and strong.
Your laugh is so hearty
and you say things I've never heard before.
I am happy now.
Love me, love me a little tiny bit,
like a child,
that's the way to love me.
Love me.
We are a people used to
little things, humble and quiet,*

ad una tenerezza sfiorante
e pur profonda come il ciel,
come l'onda del mare!

Pinkerton:

Dammi ch'io baci le tue mani care.
Mia Butterfly! come t'han ben nomata
tenue farfalla...

Butterfly:

Dicon che oltre mare
se cade in man dell'uom,
ogni farfalla da uno spillo è trafitta
ed in tavola infitta!

Pinkerton:

Un po' di vero c'è.
E tu lo sai perchè?
Perchè non fugga più.
Io t'ho ghermita
Ti serro palpitante.
Sei mia.

Butterfly:

Sì, per la vita.

Pinkerton:

Vieni, vieni!
Via dall'anima in pena
l'angoscia paurosa.
È notte serena!
Guarda: dorme ogni cosa!

Butterfly:

Ah! Dolce notte!

Pinkerton:

Vieni, vieni!

*to a tenderness soft as a caress
and yet deep as the heaven,
as the wave of the sea!*

Let me kiss your dear hands.

*My Butterfly! They named you so well,
delicate butterfly...*

*They say that in the lands across the sea
if a butterfly falls into the hands of a man,
it's pierced with a pin
and fixed to a board!*

There's some truth in that.

And do you know why?

It's so that it won't fly away again.

I have caught you,

you tremble, but I am holding you tight.

You are mine.

Yes, for life.

Come then, come!

Banish from your troubled heart

all fear and anguish.

The night is calm!

Look: everything is asleep!

Ah! Sweet night!

Come then, come!

Butterfly:

Quante stelle!
Non le vidi mai sì belle!
Trema, brilla
ogni favilla
col baglior d'una pupilla!

Pinkerton:

Via l'angoscia dal tuo cor,
ti serro palpitante.

Butterfly:

Oh! quanti occhi fissi,
attenti d'ogni parte a riguardar!
pei firmamenti, via pei lidi, via pel mare!
Quanti sguardi ride il ciel!
Tutto estatico d'amor, ride il ciel!

Italian words by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica

*So many stars!
I've never seen them so lovely before!
Every point of light
is trembling, glistening
like the gleam of an eye!*

*Banish all anguish from your heart;
you tremble but I am holding you tight.*

*Oh! how many eyes are fixed on us,
watching us from every side!
From the heavens, over the shore, over the sea!
So many eyes – heaven is smiling!
Filled with the ecstasy of love, heaven is smiling!*

English translations by Natalie Shea

Antoinette Halloran

Antoinette Halloran is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts and has an Honours degree in Music from the University of Melbourne. Since graduating, she has appeared in many productions ranging from opera to musical theatre and cabaret. Music theatre highlights include roles in *The Phantom of the Opera*, *A Little Night Music*, *Masterclass*, *Forbidden Broadway*, *The Merry Widow* and *The Opera Burlesque*.



fan tutte for Melbourne Opera; in 2006, she appeared as Fiordiligi in the inaugural season of Victorian Opera. She also featured as a guest judge and panelist on the ABC television series *Operatunity Oz*, and appears regularly on *Spicks and Specks*, also on ABC TV.

In 2007, Antoinette Halloran sang the title role in *Rusalka*, Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire* and Johanna in *Sweeney Todd* for Opera Australia. Engagements in 2008 include Mimi for both Opera Australia and New Zealand Opera, and Adina in *The Elixir of Love* for Victorian Opera.

Concert engagements have included performances of the Mozart Requiem with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, *Carmina burana* with the Melbourne Chorale, *El Niño* with Sydney Philharmonia Choirs and Haydn's *Creation* and Faure's Requiem with the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic. Antoinette Halloran has performed in concert with Elvis Costello and the Brodsky Quartet for the Sydney Festival, and featured as a guest soloist with the Adelaide and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras. She appears on the *Classic 100 Opera Concert* CD, released on ABC Classics.

Roles for Opera Australia have included Mimi in *La bohème*, Despina in *Così fan tutte*, Gianetta in *The Gondoliers*, Ellen in *Lakmé* and Josephine in *H.M.S. Pinafore*. She has sung the title role in *Madama Butterfly*, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, Pamina in *The Magic Flute* and Fiordiligi in *Così*

Rosario La Spina

Rosario La Spina trained at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, continuing his studies at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester under the tutelage of Joseph Ward OBE. During this period, he made guest appearances as Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the Stadttheater Bern in Switzerland, and as a soloist in opera galas with the Ulster Orchestra in Belfast and the Cairo Symphony Orchestra in Egypt.

Having gained first prize in the tenor competition held by the La Scala Academy in 2000, Rosario embarked on the Academy's two-year Young Singers' course, where he studied with Luciana Serra and Leyla Gencer. This culminated in his La Scala debut as the Messenger in *Samson and Delilah*, where he appeared with Plácido Domingo and Olga Borodina. In 2002, Rosario La Spina won first prize in the Mario del Monaco International Opera Competition and made his principal role debut at La Scala as Riccardo in Verdi's *Oberto*, reprising the role in Genova.

The following year saw his debut at the Verdi Festival in Parma's Teatro Regio as Arvino in *I Lombardi*; he also covered the role of Manrico (*Il trovatore*) for Welsh National Opera and appeared as Alfredo (*La traviata*) in Modena and Luigi (*Il tabarro*) in Osaka, Japan. In 2004, he



sang The Duke in *Rigoletto* for New Zealand Opera, Cavaradossi (*Tosca*) under Richard Hickox at the St Endellion Festival, and Canio (*Pagliacci*) with the Taipei Symphony Orchestra, as well as touring Spain in concert with the Parma Ensemble. He made his Opera Australia debut as Cavaradossi in 2005 and has subsequently appeared as The Prince (*The Love for Three Oranges*), Alfredo, Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*), The Prince (*Rusalka*), Calaf (*Turandot*), Rodolfo (*La bohème*) and in the title role of *The Tales of Hoffmann*. Other recent operatic engagements have included Alfredo for West Australian Opera and, in 2007, his American debut as Rodolfo for Seattle Opera.

Rosario La Spina has also been a regular guest soloist with the Sydney and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras and The Queensland Orchestra, and appears on the CD/DVD *Classical Spectacular* with the MSO (ABC Classics). In 2008, he sings Pinkerton in Melbourne, Don José (*Carmen*) in Sydney and Melbourne, and returns to Seattle as Radames (*Aida*).

www.rosariolaspina.com

Stephen Mould

Stephen Mould was born in Sydney and studied piano and composition at the NSW Conservatorium of Music. In 1985, he moved to London and continued conducting and composition studies at the Royal Academy of Music, and studies at English National Opera. During this time he also worked as an orchestral and choral conductor and as a freelance répétiteur in London and Marseille.



In 1990, Stephen Mould won an Australian Singing Competition award for operatic studies and returned to Europe, working as a conductor and musical assistant in a number of houses in Germany, Belgium and Norway. He was engaged as an assistant at the Théâtre de la Monnaie, Brussels and in 1992 was appointed to the music staff of Opera Frankfurt as assistant to the Music Director. During this time in Europe, he also took part in several summer festivals and was associated with the music conservatoriums in Würzburg and Frankfurt.

In 1996, he returned to Australia and joined the staff of Opera Australia. Since his return, Stephen Mould has undertaken engagements for the Sydney and Melbourne Festivals, Symphony Australia and Sydney Philharmonia Choirs. In 1998, he assisted on State Opera of South Australia's production of Wagner's *Ring*

cycle; he conducted *La bohème* for Opera Australia in 1999. In 2000, he conducted *Simon Boccanegra* for the national company and the *Stars of Opera Australia* concert with the SBS Youth Orchestra.

Stephen Mould is currently Head of Music at Opera Australia, and in recent seasons has conducted the following operas for the company: *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Magic Flute*, *Signor Bruschino*, *La Voix Humaine*, *Rusalka*, *The Gondoliers* and *The Pirates of Penzance*. In 2006 he conducted *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci* for the Macau International Music Festival. Recent concert engagements have included *Swing into Spring* with the Sydney Symphony, an opera gala for The Queensland Orchestra and Verdi's Requiem for Willoughby Symphony Orchestra.

In 2008, Stephen Mould conducts *Carmen*, *The Makropulos Secret* and *My Fair Lady* for Opera Australia and makes his American debut conducting *Madama Butterfly* for Baltimore Opera Company.

The Queensland Orchestra

The Queensland Orchestra (TQO) is the largest of Queensland's leading performing arts companies and the state's only professional symphony orchestra. Employing 88 full-time musicians, TQO plays a vital role in Queensland's arts, community and corporate sectors,

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In fulfilling its vision to touch the hearts and minds of Queenslanders through music, TQO's annual season presents seven contrasting concert series, alongside hugely successful special event concerts with popular artists, a state-wide touring schedule visiting at least 15 centres annually, an extensive education program reaching 15,000 young people each year, a free community engagement program, and innovative corporate workshops. In addition, TQO performs for major arts festivals, state and national opera and ballet companies, direct broadcasts and recordings.

Providing these orchestral services involves TQO in over 100 performances across 47 weeks of the year, to live audiences of 100,000 people annually. TQO draws on 60 years of local orchestral heritage, having been formed in 2001 from the merger of the state's forerunner Symphony and Philharmonic Orchestras.

The Orchestra has received significant critical acclaim, winning the 2007 *Limelight* Award for Best Orchestral Performance and receiving regular ARIA Award nominations for Best Classical Album for its recordings on the ABC Classics label.

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