



Michael Fabiano Verdi · Donizetti

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA · ENRIQUE MAZZOLA

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Total playing time: 57. 03

* with **London Voices** (chorus master: **Terry Edwards**)

Michael Fabiano, tenor

London Philharmonic Orchestra

Conducted by **Enrique Mazzola**



From my first days of study in opera, I've always had a deep intrigue with the era of late bel canto leading into Verdi's works. The late bel canto era of opera (1835 and beyond) is a reckoning in time of a paradigm shift in operatic composition. The beautiful line of Bellini or crispness of Rossini gave way to the fire-laden later works of Donizetti. And it's in this fire that Verdi's works become even more relevant. A keen listening to *Ernani* and *Poliuto* next to each other reveals a symbiosis of sonority between the two composers. The works that Donizetti and Verdi wrote between 1835 and 1875 are of great interest to me because they reveal a drastic development in musical architecture and drama, bringing instrumentation, harmony, and layers of text and music much closer to each other than they were in decades before. My album is but a taste of this big bel canto era.

Michael Fabiano

Verdi: Luisa Miller (1849)

"Oh! fede negar potessi ... Quando le sere al placido"

Giuseppe Verdi's tenor roles are largely invested in revealing the humanity of either a helpless slave to fate or its master. Rodolfo (*Luisa Miller*) lies midway in that continuum: a victim of his fate, he ultimately takes charge, with tragic consequences for all. His «Quando le sere al placido» in Act II marks the first moment we hear the full musical depths of a figure no longer willing to accept his fate. As Rodolfo expresses pain at Luisa's presumed betrayal, the music oscillates between helplessness and nostalgia on the one hand and heroic dignity and outrage on the other. At this critical moment we first hear middle-period Verdi, and also in the last act, whose ending reflects a common pattern, the tenor's suicide. Settimio Malvezzi, Rodolfo's creator, mirrored the contrasts in Rodolfo's writing, performing high-lying elegant parts like Rodrigo (Rossini's *Otello*) alongside more strenuous roles like Pollione (Bellini's *Norma*).

Verdi: Rigoletto (1851)

"La donna è mobile"

It is no surprise the supple, suave writing for the Duke (*Rigoletto*) was introduced by Raffaele Mirate, who earned much fame in Donizetti. Everything in this opera demonstrates the vividness with which Verdi could summon up a distinctive character, from the dour sarcastic Sparafucile to the tormented title role to the idealism in Gilda to the insouciance in the callous Duke. Leaving aside Piave's fine libretto, the music tells the story. The aria heard here became an instant hit, never going out of fashion, assuming iconic status as capturing the essence of Italian opera.

Donizetti: Poliuto (1838)

"Veleno e l'aura ... Fu macchiato l'onor mio ... Sfolgorò divino raggio"

Today's renewed understanding of Gaetano Donizetti's importance to Verdi centers around Donizetti's mature collaborations

with librettist Salvatore Cammarano. The bold imagination and creative strength in *Roberto Devereux* (1837), *Poliuto* (1838) and *Maria di Rohan* anticipate Verdi, not to be matched again in sheer artistic authority until the full flowering of Verdi's middle period. Donizetti's *Poliuto* lies at a crossroads in tenor history. Although the tenor in Acts I and III parallels many qualities familiar in more lyrically-written Donizetti roles, Act II reflects the ambitions both Donizetti and tenor Adolphe Nourrit, the intended protagonist, brought to this piece. There, both a ferocious Grand Finale and the staggering two-part *scena* heard here anticipate Verdi. Although this two-part selection follows a traditional structural format musically, it does not follow a traditional format vocally: The tenor usually opens a *scena* with reflective inward sentiments, stressing gentler vocal qualities, more hard-driving qualities reserved for a flashier second half. Here, both parts are equally hard-driving, an atypical test of both

incisive declamation and stamina. Poliuto, a Christian martyr, first expresses jealous suspicions of his wife Paolina, only to turn his attention to a heroic rescue of a Christian comrade when learning of his arrest. Nourrit had self-exiled to Naples for this premiere, driven from Paris by Gilbert-Louis Duprez's triumph in 1837 with the first known high C from the chest. Nourrit's bigger sound hardly needed such enhancement; yet he now felt he too needed a top from the chest. He could not bring the chest voice up to a C; but the resulting high A was likely the most powerful sound yet heard in the opera world. Hence this selection's emphatic setting for "immenso", climaxing on a high A. Sadly, Naples' censors banned this piece for its religious overtones, and Nourrit's disappointment was so bitter it drove him to a tragic end right out of opera, a death leap from the top story of his hotel.

Verdi: *Un ballo in maschera* (1859)

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

Of those tenors active during the bulk of Verdi's career, none delighted Verdi more than Gaetano Fraschini. Fraschini's incisive tones could encompass both Verdi's most energetic writing and the gentler style of earlier years. Here, Verdi gave Fraschini the finest gift of his career, the last and most wide-ranging challenge of all. For many, Verdi's inspiration throughout this work marks his greatest achievement to date. We hear the vividness of Verdi's mature gifts in the tenor's "Forse la soglia attinse" from the final act. In great anguish, a King's agitated recitative gives way to somber and deliberate phrases as he contemplates the finality of Amelia's departure from his court. The range of Fraschini's expressive powers is further shown in the hero's climactic resolve to see Amelia one last time.

Donizetti: *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835)

"Tombe degli avi miei ... Fra poco a me ricovero"

This selection is the earliest on this album and holds special interest, both for the opera itself, Donizetti's first true masterpiece, and for its being written for a great tenor still finding himself, Gilbert-Louis Duprez. In 1835, Duprez was not yet the fearsome lion with his high C from the chest heard at his Paris Opera debut in 1837. But the deeply expressive nature of Edgardo's music here shows that Duprez was already a highly expressive artist capable of uncommon depths. Here, in the wake of Lucia's apparent betrayal of their love, Edgardo anticipates his eventual suicide. Like *Roberto Devereux* (1837), *Poliuto* (1838) and *Maria di Rohan*, *Lucia* is also a Donizetti/Cammarano collaboration, the first success of that partnership, signaling many a masterpiece to come. As with those three, we can hear anticipations of Verdi in *Lucia's* dramaturgy and its musical/theatrical pulse.

Verdi: *La Forza del Destino* (1862)

"Qual sangue sparsi ... S'affronti la morte"

By contrast, here is the latest excerpt on this album, a rare selection from the original *La Forza del Destino*, premiered in Saint Petersburg in 1862. Its later 1869 version is the one usually heard. While the tenor role of Alvaro is hardly inconsiderable in its later version, it was originally a longer and more varied part, tailored to tenor Enrico Tamberlik, who first negotiated the contract for the work on behalf of the Imperial Theatres. It is ironic that an opera more known for its soprano started out as a vehicle for a star tenor. Indeed, the original Alvaro assumes a slightly more important role than Leonora. He is even at the center of the action at the end, a virtual denunciation of all creation and a shocking suicide off a cliff. Tamberlik was the most versatile and the most resilient *tenore di forza* of his day. No one before or since has mastered so many of the most treacherous Italian and French tenor roles (sung in Italian),

nor made them so integral a part of his regular repertoire. Not only did he create the original Alvaro, he regularly performed in Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*, Meyerbeer's *Robert le diable*, *Les Huguenots* and *Le prophète*, Donizetti's *Poliuto* and *Les martyrs* and Verdi's *Les vêpres siciliennes*, even going outside the Italian/French repertoire to perform Florestan (Beethoven's *Fidelio*)! Tamberlik also kept his extraordinary top to the very end despite the arduousness of the most challenging tenor repertoire. It is fitting that the latest piece here is a part of the Tamberlik story, a career that sums up a whole era in Italian tenor writing. Once again, "Quel sangue sparsi", with its death wish in the midst of battle, shows a hero longing for his end.

Donizetti: *Maria di Rohan* (1843)

"Alma soave e cara"

The final Donizetti/Cammarano collaboration, *Maria di Rohan* is viewed by William Ashbrook and some others as perhaps Donizetti's

finest work. In Act II of *Maria di Rohan*, the lyric beauty in Chalais's "Alma soave e cara", written for the sweet-voiced tenor Carlo Guasco, conveys the character's gentle nature in distinctly Donizettian terms, as he still copes with the shock of learning that his beloved Maria is now married. The melancholy cast of this aria gives us a premonition of Chalais's tragic end, again a suicide at the opera's curtain.

Verdi: *Ernani* (1844)

"Odi il voto ... Sprezzo la vita"

Ernani was the greatest success for Verdi to that point, but its title role had a difficult birth with its creator, Carlo Guasco. Compared to previous roles like the gentle Chalais in Donizetti's *Maria di Rohan* (1843), Guasco found Verdi's Gothic outlaw uncongenial (despite ending in a suicide like Chalais), and he tried bowing out. By Opening Night, he was badly hoarse, and although he rallied on subsequent nights, the praise accorded him dwelt only on qualities for which he had

previously gained fame: "singing gracefully, sweetly" (*Il Bazar*, Sep. 7th, 1844). Some critics may debate whether these qualities are apt to the role. It is notable that when the opera was again mounted at the end of the year, a heroic accomplished Arnold in Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* was instead chosen, tenor Nicola Ivanoff. So Verdi composed a demanding new aria heard here, "Odi il voto ... Sprezzo la vita", which has only been attempted by a very few. From this aria, expressing Ernani's determination to rescue his beloved Elvira from King Charles, we can guess the heroic dimension that Ivanoff brought to Ernani.

Verdi: *I Due Foscari* (1844)

"Notte, perpetua note ... Non maledirmi"

Here, we find Jacopo Foscari (*I Due Foscari*) haunted by terrifying visions in the darkness of his prison. As with Rodolfo (*Luisa Miller*, 1849), Jacopo bridges the span from helpless victim to heroic defiance. Its creator, Giacomo Roppa, mirrored that contrast: elegant,



gracious parts like Lorenzo (Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*) and Gennaro (Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia*) alongside more intense roles like Pollione (Bellini's *Norma*) and the title role in Meyerbeer's *Robert le diable*.

Verdi: Oberto (1839)

"Ciel, che feci! ... Ciel pietoso"

The earliest Verdi selection on this album, Riccardo's "Ciel, che feci" from Verdi's first opera, *Oberto*, already shows Verdi's assured mastery in a distinctly lyrical style. Riccardo expresses remorse for having killed his former beloved's father in a duel. Lorenzo Salvi, a true *tenore di grazia*, created this part, a role that bears testimony to Verdi's close study of Donizetti. In fact, rehearsals for *Oberto*'s 1839 premiere at La Scala had to be worked around concurrent rehearsals for Donizetti's *Roberto Devereux* (which had only received its world premiere two years before). So Verdi's impressions of *Roberto Devereux* were likely intense and lingered for some while after. Later, in works following *Oberto*, we can

hear something of the agitated accents of *Devereux*'s regal heroine in Verdi's *Nabucco* (1842) and *Macbeth* (1847).

Verdi: Il Corsaro (1848)

"Ah sì, ben dite ... Tutto pareva sorridere ...
Pronti siate a seguirmi"

Finally, we return to Verdi's favorite tenor, Gaetano Fraschini. If *Un Ballo in Maschera* was the last and finest gift Fraschini ever received from Verdi, then *Il Corsaro* marks the first time that Verdi presented Fraschini with a role fully worthy of that tenor's great gifts. In this supercharged selection, we hear Verdi at his most vigorous, especially in the cabaletta, investing the character with a warmth and an urgency that only Verdi could evoke. In its combination of musical and theatrical drive, this sequence is a fitting conclusion to our journey through Verdi's tenor writing and its antecedents.

Geoffrey Riggs

Giuseppe Verdi, Luisa Miller

"Oh fede negar potessi... Quando le sere al placido"

Rodolfo

Oh! fede negar potessi agl'occhi miei!
Se cielo e terra, se mortali ed angeli
Attestarmi volesser ch'ella non è rea,
Mentite! io risponder dovrei, tutti mentite.
Son cifre sue! Tanta perfidia! Un'alma
Si nera! si mendace!
Ben la conobbe il padre!
Ma dunque i giuri, le speranze, la gioia,
Le lagrime, l'affanno?
Tutto è menzogna, tradimento, inganno!

Quando le sere al placido
Chiaror d'un ciel stellato
Meco figgea nell'etere
lo sguardo innamorato,
E questa mano stringermi
Dalla sua man sentia ...
Ah! mi tradia!
Allor, ch'io muto, estatico
Da' labbri suoi pendea.
Ed ella in suon angelico,

Rodolfo

Oh! I wish I could deny my own eyes!
If heaven and earth, if mortals and angels
were to swear to me that she is not guilty,
all lies, I should answer! This is her hand!
This is her hand! So much treachery!
A black soul! A liar!
Well my father knew her!
But all the promises, the hopes, the joy,
the tears, the anguish?
Everything is a lie, betrayal, deception!

When in the evenings in the calm
pale light of a starry sky
she gazed with me into the heavens
with a look of love,
and I felt this hand pressed
by her hand...
Ah! She betrayed me!
I was mute, ecstatic,
hanging from her lips.
when she said in angelic tones



“amo te sol” dicea,
Tal che sembrò l’empireo
Apirisi all’alma mia!
Ah! mi tradia!

‘I love only you’,
it seemed like the world
opened to my soul!
Ah! She betrayed me!

2

Giuseppe Verdi, *Rigoletto*

"La donna è mobile"

Duca

La donna è mobile
Qual piuma al vento,
Muta d’accento
E di pensiero.
Sempre un amabile
Leggiadro viso,
In pianto, in riso,
È menzognero.
La donna è mobile, ecc.

È sempre misero
Chi a lei s’affida,
Chi le confida
Mal cauto il core!
Pur mai non sentesi

Duke

How fickle women are,
fleeting like plumes in the wind,
simples in speech,
and simples in mind.
Always the loveable,
sweet, laughing faces,
but laughing or crying,
the face is false for sure.
How fickle women are, etc.

If you rely on them
you will regret it,
and if you trust them
you are undone!
Yet none can consider himself

Felice appieno
Chi su quel seno
Non liba amore.
La donna è mobile, ecc.

fully contented
who has not tasted
love in their arms!
How fickle women are, etc.

3

Gaetano Donizetti, *Poliuto*

"Veleno è l’aura ch’io respiro ... Fu macchiato l’onor mio ... Sfolgorò divino raggio"

Poliuto

Veleno è l’aura ch’io respiro!
Indegna!
Ella invitava il traditor ...
Non mente, no, Callistene ...
Io stesso io vidi!
E un brando,
e un pugnol non avea!
Ma vivo ancor!
Ma trema, trema, o coppia rea!
Fu machiato l’onor mio
Necessaria è la vendetta
Spargerà di sangue un rivo,
La mia destra punitrice,
Sul codardo semivivo
ferir vo’la traditrice

Poliuto

The air I breathe is poison!
Unworthy!
She invited that traitor...
Don’t try to deceive me, Callistene...
I saw it myself!
And a sword,
a dagger I did not have!
But I still live!
But tremble, tremble, you guilty pair!
My honour has been sullied,
and revenge is now needed,
my punishing hand
will cause a river of blood,
on this half-alive coward
I will wound her

E strapparle il cor d'al petto
 Il perverso infido cor
 Ah, l'amai d'immenso affetto!
 Ora immenso è il mio furor

Eterno Dio, che sento!
 In gran periglio
 stanno i fratelli
 Ed io! ed io!
 Cessa, fatal consiglio dell'ira!
 Il ciel mi schiude
 la via che tragge a sé!
 M'infiamma una virtude
 che pria in me non era!
 Sei tu, sei tu! Gran Dio!

Sfolgorò divino raggio;
 Da' miei lumi è tolto il velo ...
 Voce santa come il cielo
 di perdono a me parlò!
 Obliato è già l'oltraggio;
 più vendetta il cor non chiede...
 Dio quest'anima mi diede,
 pura a Dio la renderò, ecc.

and tear her heart from her chest,
 that wicked, perverse heart
 ah, I loved her so immensely!
 Now my fury is immense.

Eternal Father, what do I hear!
 In great danger
 are my brethren
 and so am I! So am I!
 Cease, you fatal thoughts of wrenge!
 Heaven has opened
 its gate for me.
 A virtue enflames me
 that I did not feel before!
 It is you, it is you! Great God!

Divine rage flares up;
 The veil is removed from my eyes...
 A holy, heavenly voice
 spoke to me of forgiveness!
 Forgotten already is the outrage;
 The heart now demands no more revenge
 God gave this soul to me,
 and I will dedicate it to Him, etc.

Giuseppe Verdi, *Un ballo in maschera*

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

Riccardo

Forse la soglia attinse,
 E posa alfin. - L'onore
 Ed il dover nei nostri petti han rotto
 L'abisso. - Ah! sì, Renato
 Rivedrà l'Inghilterra... e la sua sposa
 Lo seguirà. Senza un addio, l'immenso
 Oceàn ne separi... e taccia il core.
 Esito ancor? ma, oh ciel, non lo degg'io?
 Ah, l'ho segnato il sacrificio mio!

Ma se m'è forza perderti
 Per sempre, o luce mia,
 A te verrà il mio palpito
 Sotto qual ciel tu sia,
 Chiusa la tua memoria
 Nell'intimo del cor.

Ed or qual reo presagio
 Lo spirito m'assale,
 Che il rivederti annunzia

Riccardo

Perhaps she has reached home
 and she is safe at last. Honour
 and duty have broken the abyss
 between us. Ah! Renato
 will finally return to England...and his wife
 will follow him. No farewell, the vastness of
 the ocean between us...let the heart be
 silent.
 Do I still hesitate? But, my God, must I not?
 Ah, I have signed my sacrifice!

But if I can find the strength to lose you
 forever, my bright star,
 my love will reach you
 wherever you are,
 once the memory I have of you
 will be imprinted in my heart.

And now what an obscure omen
 assails my heart,
 the chance to see you again

Quasi un desio fatale...
Come se fosse l'ultima
Ora del nostro amor?

Ah! dessa è là... potrei vederla... ancora,
Riparlarle potrei...
Ma no: chè tutto or mi strappa da lei.

Che nel ballo alcuno
Alla mia vita attenderà, sta detto.
Ma se m'arresto: allora,
Ch'io pavento diran. Nol vo': nessuno
Pur sospettarlo de'. Tu va: t'appresta,
E ratto, per gioir meco la festa.
Sì, rivederti, Amelia,
E nella tua beltà,
Anco una volta l'anima
D'amor mi brillerà!

announces a fatal desire
as if it were the last hour
Of our love?

Ah! She is there...I could meet her...once
again...
I could talk to her again..
No: now everything keeps me away from
her.

At the ball someone
will try to kill me, I was told.
But if I don't go, then
they will think I am a coward. Not this:
No one must even suspect it. Go: get ready,
immediately, to attend the ball with me.
Yes, to see you again, Amelia.
And faced with your beauty,
once again my heart
will burn with love.

Gaetano Donizetti, *Lucia di Lammermoor*

"Tomba degli avi miei ... Fra poco a me ricovero"

Edgardo

Tombe degli avi miei, l'ultimo avanzo
D'una stirpe infelice,
Deh! raccogliete voi. Cessò dell'ira
Il breve foco...sul nemico acciaio
Abbandonar mi vo'. Per me la vita
È orrendo peso!... L'universo intero
È un deserto per me senza Lucia!
Di faci tuttavia
Splende il castello...Ah! scarsa
Fu la notte al tripudio! Ingrata donna!
Mentr'io mi struggo in disperato pianto,
Tu ridi, esulti accanto
Al felice consorte!
Tu delle gioie in seno, io della morte!

Fra poco a me ricovero
Darà negletto avello;
Una pietosa lagrima
Non scenderà su quello!..
Ah! Fin degli estinti, ahi, misero!
Manca il conforto a me.

Edgardo

Tombs of my fathers,
last son of an unhappy race,
Receive me, I implore you. My anger's
brief fire is quenched...I will fall on
my foe's sword. For me, life
is a horrible burden! The whole universe
is a desert for me without Lucia!
Yet the castle
gleams with torches...Ah, the night
was too short for the revels! Heartless jade!
While I pine away in hopeless tears,
you laugh and gloat
by your happy consort's side!
You amid joys, I near to death!

Soon this neglected tomb
will give me refuge.
A compassionate tear
will not fall upon it...ah!
Alas, for wretched me not even
the solace of the dead.

Tu pur, tu pur dimentica
Quel marmo dispregiato!
Mai non passarvi, o barbara,
Del tuo consorte a lato, Ah!
Rispetta almen le ceneri
Di chi moria per te.
Mai non passarvi,
Tu lo dimentica,
Rispetta almeno chi muore per te.
Oh, barbara, io moro per te.

Giuseppe Verdi, *La Forza del Destino*

"Qual sangue sparsi ... S'affronti la morte"

Alvaro

Qual sangue sparsi! Orrore!
Il cor mi stringe ferrea man!
Io l'uccisi, e l'amava!
Qual t'attende fiero colpo, Leonora!
Un mar di sangue
Or ne divide per sempre!
Ei m'era fratel! ah! l'uccisi!
Ohimè! l'angiol di Dio con ignea spada
M'insegue, m'incalza, atterra! Ah!...

You too, forget
that despised marble tombstone!
Never visit it, oh cruel one,
by your husband's side.
Ah, respect at least the ashes
of him who dies for you.
Never visit it,
forget it exists,
respect at least the one who died for you.
Oh, barbarian, I die for you.

Alvaro

What blood have I shed! Horror!
An iron hand grips my heart!
I have killed, where I loved!
What cruel blow awaits you, Leonora!
A sea of blood
now divides us for ever!
He was my brother! Ah! I killed him!
Alas! The angel of God with sword of fire
Pursues me, presses upon me, humiliates

Come Caino son maledetto in terra.
Miserere di me, pietà, Signor,
Concedi il tuo perdon a tanto errore.

Granatieri

All'armi! Ecco i Tedeschi.
Arde la regal tenda, venite, capitano.
Vittoria, o morte.

Alvaro

S'affronti la morte, e sia finita
Di questa mia vita la barbara sorte.
Si voli a morte.
Ah, se il destino rio mi vieta morir
A Dio consacrato io giuro morire.
Sì! Andiam, andiam!

Gaetano Donizetti, *Maria di Rohan*

"Alma soave e cara"

Chalais

Alma soave e cara
Che al tuo Fattore ascendi,

me! Ah! ...
Like Cain I am accursed on the earth.
Have mercy on me, pity, Lord,
grant your pardon for such a misdeed.

Grenadiers

To arms! Here come the Germans.
The royal tent is afire, come, Captain.
Victory, or death.

Alvaro

Meet death, and let there be an end
to the cruel fate of this life of mine.
Let death come quickly.
Ah, if evil destiny forbids me to die,
I swear to die devoted to God.
Yes! Let us go, let us go!

Chalais

Thou spirit, sweet and dear,
who art to heaven ascending,

La dipartita amara
Per poco ancor sospendi.
Fra breve in cor lo sento,
lo pur sarò sotterra;
Amor ci univa in terra,
Ci unisca amore in Ciel!

this last and bitter parting
suspend for a few moments;
I feel that shortly too
I shall lie in my grave.
Love on earth united us,
love will join us in heaven!

Giuseppe Verdi, *Ernani*

"Odi il voto ... Sprezzo la vita"

Ernani

Odi il voto, o grande Iddio,
che al tuo soglio un cor ti porta;
deh, ti piaccia il brando mio
di quel sangue dissetar.
Nell'angoscia del mio core
questo è sol che mi conforta:
del trafitto genitore
l'ombra inulta alfin placar.

Coro

Vieni, con te dividere
vogliamo gioie e pene;
imponi, e come folgori

Ernani

Hear the oath, o great God,
which this hear raises to your throne;
Come, by your grace, my sword
shall be slaked on that blood.
In my heartfelt anguish
this is my only comfort:
That the spirit of my slain father
I am at last going to placate.

Chorus

Come, we want to share
joy and sorrow with you
impose, and like thunder

teco saprem pagnar.

Ernani

Verrete voi? Giuratelo!

Coro

Giuriam sul nostro acciar!

Ernani

Giuriam! Ah! Sprezzo la vita:
né più m'alletta
che per la speme della vendetta.
È la vendetta gioia del forte
Che non rifiuta per lei morir.

Coro

È la vendetta gioia del forte
per la vendetta bello è il morir.

Ernani & Coro

Giuriam ecc.

we will strike.

Ernani

So you are with me? Swear it!

Chorus

We swear it on our swords!

Ernani

Let us swear! Ah! I despise life:
It has no charm left for me
except the hope of vengeance.
Vengeance is the joy of the strong man,
who does not shrink from dying for it.

Chorus

Vengeance is the joy of the strong:
Nothing is more beautiful than to die for
vengeance.

Ernani & Chorus

We swear etc.

Giuseppe Verdi, *I due Foscari*

"Notte, perpetua notte... Non maledirmi"

Jacopo

Notte!... perpetua notte che qui regni!
 Siccome agli occhi il giorno,
 potessi almen celare al pensier mio
 il fine disperato che m'aspetta!...
 Tòrmi potessi alla costor vendetta!...
 Ma oh ciell!... che mai vegg'io!...
 Sorgon di terra mille e mille spettri!...
 A sé mi chiaman essi!...
 Uno s'avanza!... ha gigantesche forme!...
 Il reciso suo teschio
 ferocemente colla manca porta!...
 A me lo addita... e colla destra mano
 mi getta in volto il sangue che ne cola!...
 Ah lo ravviso!... è desso... è Carmagnola!

Non maledirmi, o prode,
 se son al Doge figlio;
 de' dieci fu il Consiglio
 che a morte ti dannò!

Jacopo

Night!... Perpetual night that reigns here!
 As in the eyes the day,
 I could at least conceal myself from my
 thoughts
 About the desperate end that awaits me!...
 Rescue me from his vengeance!...
 But heavens!... this I've never seen!...
 Thousands of ghosts ascend from the
 earth!...
 They call me!
 One of them advances, a giant!...
 He fiercely bangs his skull
 against the left door!...
 He points at me... and with his right hand,
 he throws blood in my face!
 Ah, now I recognize him, it's Carmagnola!

Do not curse me, brave men,
 if I am the Doge's son;
 it was the Council of Ten
 that damned you to death!

Me pure sol per frode
 vedi quaggiù dannato,
 e il padre sventurato
 difendermi non può...
 Cessa... la vista orribile!...
 Più sostener non so.

I was only punished for fraud.
 Down here you find a damned,
 and my unfortunate father
 cannot defend me...
 Stop... you horrible sight
 I can't hold it any longer.

Giuseppe Verdi, *Oberto*

"Ciel, che feci! ... Ciel pietoso"

Riccardo

Ciel, che feci!... di quel sangue...
 Ho macchiato il brando mio!...
 Dove ascondere poss'io
 Il delitto; il mio rossor?
 Ah sì fugga!...
 Oh Dio... Chi piange? ...
 M'ingannai... sussurra il vento.
 Ah no!... l'ultimo lamento
 È del misero che muor.

Ciel pietoso, ciel clemente,
 Se pregarti ancor mi lice,
 Deh! Perdona a un infelice,

Riccardo

Oh God, what have I done!
 My sword is stained with his blood!...
 Where can I hide my misdeed;
 My mortal sin?
 I must run away from here!...
 Oh God...who is weeping?...
 I misunderstood...it is the wind blowing.
 Ah no!... it is the last moan
 of the miserable dying man.

Piteous God, merciful God,
 if you still allow me to beg you,
 Forgive a miserable man!

Tu mi salva per pietà!
Oh rimorso! Del morente
L'ombra ognor m'inseguirà.

Save my soul, for pity's sake!
Oh regret! The ghost of this dying man
Will haunt me forever.

11

Giuseppe Verdi, *Il corsaro*

"Ah sì, ben dite ... Tutto pareva sorridere ... Pronti siate a seguirarmi"

Corrado

Ah sì, ben dite... guerra...
Perenne, atroce, inesorabile guerra
Contro gli uomini tutti;
Io per essi fui reo... tutti gli abborro!
Temuto da costoro ed esecrato
Infelice son io, ma vendicato!

Tutto pareva sorridere
Al viver mio primiero:
L'aura, la luce, l'etere
E l'universo intero;
Ma un fato inesorabile
Ogni mio ben rapì.
Più non vedrò risorgere
Dell'innocenza il dì.

Corrado

Ah yes, war you say...
Perennial, atrocious, inexorable war
against all men;
They found me guilty ... I detest them all!
I was feared by them, and exorcised,
unhappy I am, but avenged!

Everything smiled at me
in my previous life:
The air, the light, the ether
and the entire universe;
But an inexorable fate
robbed me of everything.
Now I will not see
those days of innocence return.

Pronti siate a seguirarmi...
Gianni, a me tu appresti l'anni...
Risalpiam!...
Trascorsa un'ora,
Tuoni il bronzo...
In questa sera lo comando alla bandiera.

Coro

Dici il ver? Tu stesso?...

Corrado

Sì...
Sì: dei Corsari il fulmine
Vibrar disegno io stesso,
Dal braccio nostro oppresso
Il Musulman cadrà.

Corrado & Coro

All'armi intrepidi
Cadiam' sull'empia Luna;
Qual possa in noi s'aduna
Il perfido apprenderà!

Are you ready to follow me...
Gianni, help me prepare...
Let us sail out!...
Within an hour,
we will fire the cannons
this evening I will command the flag.

Chorus

Really? You yourself?

Corrado

Yes...
Yes: of the Corsairs, I myself will be the one
who schemes the fatal blow,
from our oppressed arm
the muslim will fall.

Corrado & Chorus

With fearless weapons,
let's bring that impious empire down;
We will show that wicked bunch
the power of our united forces!

Acknowledgments

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