

1910

Lesson Book: Grand Opera

Rubinkam I. Nathaniel

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GRAND OPERA LESSONS
and
EXAMINATION PAPERS

1 to 10

Siegel-Myers
Correspondence School of Music
Chicago, Illinois

A Course of Lessons in the Study of

Grand Opera

By Nathaniel I. Rubinkam, Ph. D.



Lesson No. 1

Giacomo Puccini and His Opera, *Madam
Butterfly*, in Two Lessons

Part One

Puccini and His Opera *Madam Butterfly*

Puccini



IACOMO PUCCINI, one of the very foremost of the present day masters of music in Italy, is a scion of an old family of musicians. He is a native of Tuscany, where he was born in the City of Lucca in 1858. In Lucca he received his first musical education. Later he became the pupil of Bazzini and Ponchielli, in Milan, where he now has a town house and is a teacher of musical composition in the Milan Conservatory. Puccini is a great lover of the "out of doors," and is also somewhat of a sportsman.

He has a villa at The Tower of the Lake (Torro del Lago), near his native city, a beautiful sheet of water with mountains in the background, and connected by small streams with the Mediterranean Sea, near the spot where the body of the poet Shelley was cremated by Byron and his friends in 1822.

Photographs show us the musician in his motor boat, "*Butterfly*," on Torro del Lago; also shooting waterfowl, snowballing in the highlands of Sicily, descending Mt. Aetna on mule back, and wrestling at Pompeii.

He was once a victim of a serious automobile accident, which confined him to his villa at Torro del Lago, where many of his musical compositions have been created. Puccini visited America in 1907.

His first opera, "*Le Villi*," was founded on Fontana's story of the witch dancers in the Black Forest, and was produced at Milan in 1884.

The second libretto was also composed by the same fantastic writer, Fontana. It is entitled "*Edgar*," and is based on a wild melodrama of Alfred de Musset—a story

of love and fate. It is a musical lyric drama in three acts, and was produced at the Scala Theater in Milan in 1889.

His third work, "Manon Lescaut," from Abbe Prevost's story of love and passion of the same name, had already been treated by Halevy, Balfe, Auber and Massenet. It was first produced at the Royal Theater at Turin in 1893.

"La Boheme," Puccini's next opera, is one of his most popular works, a lyric drama in four acts. The libretto was prepared by Giacosa and Illica, founded on Muerger's story of the Bohemian life in the Latin quarter of Paris. It was first produced at Turin in 1896.

For his fifth opera, "Tosca," the same librettists founded the plot upon Victorien Sardau's Roman tragedy of the same name, which portrays a story of lust and crime. The opera was given at Rome in 1900.

The sixth opera, *Madam Butterfly*, we have chosen for detailed treatment here. It may be asked how such a realistic theme can be expressed in music, which can voice only universal ideas, lyrical emotions, etc. I will answer the question by a few sentences as to the music by Mr. E. A. Baughan, whom Mr. Wakeling Dry cites in his "Living Masters of Music":

"The character of *Madam Butterfly* herself * * * is a fit subject for music. The emotions to be expressed are mainly lyrical. The other characters are outside musical treatment. * * * Of all the cast the only characters that have thoughts or feelings which can be interpreted by music are *Butterfly's* maid, Suzuki, and her uncle, the Bonze, who objects on religious grounds to *Butterfly's* marriage.

"Puccini has written a love duet for the American naval officer and *Madam Butterfly*, but as he can make no pretence to any more passionate feeling than a passing sensualism there is a want of emotional grip in the scene. * * *

"The composer has overcome many of these difficulties with much cleverness. When the stage itself is not musically inspiring, he falls back on his orchestra with the happiest effect, * * * by a clever musical ensemble, and the whole drama is drawn together by Puccini's sense of atmosphere.

"*Madam Butterfly* herself is a musical creation * * * and the gradual smirching of this butterfly's brightness, until in the end she becomes a wan little figure of tragedy, is subtly expressed in the music.

"It is not deep music—indeed it should not be—but it has all the more effect because it is thoroughly in character. * * * Puccini has kept to his conception of the character, and *Butterfly* is never allowed to express herself on the heroic scale."



Madam Butterfly

A Japanese tragedy, founded on a book by John Luther Long and a drama by David Belasco.

An Italian Opera, libretto by L. Illica and G. Giacosa.

English version by R. H. Elkin.

Music by Giacomo Puccini.

Characters:

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Madam Butterfly (Cho-Cho-San)..... | Soprano | |
| Suzuki, Cho-Cho-San's servant..... | Mezzo-Soprano | |
| Kate Pinkerton..... | Mezzo-Soprano | |
| B. F. Pinkerton, Lieutenant in the United States navy..... | Tenor | |
| Sharpless, United States Consul at Nagasaki | Baritone | |
| Goro, a marriage broker..... | Tenor | |
| Prince Yamadori..... | Baritone | |
| The Bonze, Cho-Cho-San's uncle..... | Bass | |
| Yakuside | Baritone | |
| The Imperial Commissioner..... | Bass | |
| The Official Registrar | } Members of the Chorus { | Baritone |
| Cho-Cho-San's Mother | | Mezzo-Soprano |
| The Aunt | | Mezzo-Soprano |
| The Cousin | | Soprano |
| Trouble, Cho-Cho-San's child. | | |
| Cho-Cho-San's relations, friends and servants. | | |
| Time of play—Present. Place—Nagasaki. | | |

Synopsis:

Act I. A Japanese House, on a hill near Nagasaki.

Act II. Scenes 1 and 2—Inside Butterfly's little house.

Madam Butterfly is the latest of the first six of Puccini's operas. The artist was inspired to its composition on seeing Belasco's drama at the Duke of York's Theater in London in 1901.

As a music drama it stands in direct antithesis to the great symbolic creations, such as those of Richard Wagner. *Madam Butterfly* is one of the most realistic presentations of everyday life. There is not in it a line, a picture, a personage or landscape, which does not photograph an actuality of the hour.

Its unconscious simplicity charms us, its deep pathos tugs at our heart strings, its practical international ethics—or unethics—rebuke us. The ideals of our American representatives in foreign parts are exposed in an uncomplimentary light. The opera is a lesson on the conduct of Americans abroad. Its picture of our world-roamers appeals to us as all too true.

Its international quality is emphasized in the music, where one at critical moments in the play hears the mingling of Japanese lyrics with the melody of our “Star Spangled Banner.”

The scenery is Japanese. The background of the stage is a picture of the well-known bay, harbour and town of Nagasaki, on the southwestern coast of Japan.

The little Japanese house which greets us in the first scene is high up on the hillside, and commands a beautiful view in the distance below of city and haven. It is a long, hard climb up the hillside to this little Japanese home, with its pretty garden and terrace.

The house has just been bought by Lieutenant Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton, of the United States Navy. Pinkerton has secured it for nine hundred and ninety-nine years, with the option of canceling the con-

tract any month he chooses. He has not a great respect for Japanese contracts.

He has procured the home as a nest for the beautiful little fifteen-year-old Japanese girl whom he proposes to marry. Her name is Cho-Cho-San, nicknamed in Japanese fashion, *Madam Butterfly*.

Pinkerton is a plucky American. Like many of his fellow countrymen abroad, to him

"Life is not worth living
If he can't win the best
And fairest of each country,
The heart of each fair maid."

With the spirit of too many Americans in foreign parts, Pinkerton feels no more the gravity of dealing with the bodies and souls of strange peoples than he does with property. He sings:

"And so I'm marrying in Japanese fashion,
Tied for nine hundred and ninety-nine years,
Free, though, to annul the marriage, monthly.
America forever!"

Pinkerton has bought his charming little wife, Cho-Cho-San, or *Butterfly*, of Goro, a marriage broker, for one hundred yen (about eighty dollars).

Act I—Scene I

A Japanese House on a Hill near Nagasaki

The first scene shows us this officious little Japanese wife-vender exhibiting to the American lieutenant the curious tiny house on the hill, on whose terrace the marriage will take place.

Pinkerton is charmed with the quaint arrangements. It is certainly a magical bit of mechanism—with sliding ceilings and partitions:

“The walls will come and go
Just as may suit your fancy
To exchange or to vary,
New and old in the same surroundings.
* * * And so a fairy dwelling
Springs like a tow’r from nowhere,
Complete from base to attic;
It comes and goes by magic!”

Goro claps his hands and summons three servants; a trusty handmaid for the bride, a cook and a waiting man. All three fall on their knees, as orientals do, and bow to the earth before the stranger. They are introduced as Gentle-Breeze-of-the-Morning, Ray-of-the-Golden-Sun and Sweet-Scented-Pine-Tree.

The first named is Suzuki, a mezzo-soprano, who plays quite a role in the drama as *Madam Butterfly*’s maid. As Pinkerton laughs at their picturesque names she stoops low and sings:

“Your smile is fair as flowers.
Thus spake the wise Ogunama:
A smile conquers all, and defies
Every Trouble. Pearls may be won by smiling.
Smiles can ope the portals
Of Paradise—
The Perfume of the Gods,
The Fountain of Life.”

Goro sees that the practical American is tiring of this oriental effusiveness. He claps his hands and disperses them all.

Everything is now ready for the arrival of the bride. Goro, whom Pinkerton calls the Shining-Light-of-Brokers, bows low at the compliment and enumerates the guests at the wedding ceremony:

“There will come: the Official Registrar,
The relations, your country's Consul,
Your future wife. Here you'll sign the contract
And solemnize the marriage.”

Are there many relations? inquires the practical American. Goro replies:

“Her mother, Grandma, and the Bonze*, her uncle
(Who'll scarcely honor us with his appearance),
Her cousins, male and female—
Of ancestors, I reckon, and other blood relations,
A round two dozen.”

Sharpless, the Consul, is the first to arrive. He has sputtered, stumbled and sweat his way up the long hill, and enters the terrace breathless, but is charmed with the view—Nagasaki, the ocean, the harbour!—Pinkerton, offering him refreshment, sings:

“The whole world over,
On business and pleasure bent,
The Yankee travels, all dangers scorning.”

The consul is a man of deeper sentiment than Pinkerton and sees the tragic side of his happy errand. He replies:

“That is an easy going gospel
Which makes life very pleasant,
But is fatal in the end.”

*The Bonze is a Buddhist Priest.

This is the first minor note. The Consul sees that the incident which Pinkerton is enjoying as an episode may be a life reality to *Madam Butterfly*. "Is the bride very pretty?" he asks of Pinkerton. Goro, the wife broker, interjects a reply—

"Fair as a garland
Of fragrant flowers! Brighter
Than a star in the heavens!
And for nothing: one hundred yen."

He suggests that he has a fine collection, but the Consul declines anything of that sort with a wave of the hand. He protests with Pinkerton. Is the lieutenant intoxicated, to be guilty of such folly?

"Maybe! Depends
On what you call intoxication!
Is't love or fancy, maid or myth?
I cannot tell you. All that I know is,
She, with her innocent charm, has entranced me.
Almost transparently fragile and slender,
Dainty in stature, quaint little figure,
Seems to have stepped down
Straight from a screen, * * *
With so much charm and such seductive graces,
That to pursue her a wild wish seized me—
Though in the quest her frail wings should be broken."

Here Pinkerton himself has suggested the portent of disaster, and is followed by the Consul:

"It were indeed sad pity
To tear those dainty wings,
And perchance to torment a trusting heart.
No cry of anguish should e'er be uttered
By that gentle and trusting little voice."

The lieutenant tries to allay Sharpless' compunctions with another drink. He regards the episode as only a

trifling love escapade—and looks off ahead to a real marriage, a real American wife!

One now hears the joyous voice of the innocent Butterfly, as she heads a company of girl friends, bridesmaids, climbing the hill. She sings—

“Across the earth and o’er the ocean,
Balmy breeze and scent of spring are blowing.
I am the happiest maiden,
The happiest in Japan,
In all the world. * * *
Friends, I have obeyed
The summons of love,
Upon the threshold standing,
Where all the glory awaits me,
That life or death can offer.”

What is sung by Butterfly and her girl friends, of flowers and sky and sea, falls on Sharpless’ ears as only the prattle and careless days of youth. To Pinkerton Butterfly expresses the weary hours of a bride’s waiting.

She tells her life story. Her people were once wealthy. She sings—

“There’s no one cares to own he was born in poverty;
Is not every vagrant, when you listen to his tale,
Of ancient lineage? Yet indeed
I have known riches. But the strongest oak
Must fall when the storm wind wracks the forest,
And we had to go as *geishas* to earn our living.”

So Butterfly had been obliged to become a dancing girl, in order to live, and had thus fallen into the hands of Goro, the marriage broker. Her girl friends, with parasols, testify with low bows and prostrations to the truth of her sayings.

Pinkerton's heart throbs at the sight of the innocent baby face of the beautiful young woman. She has a mother. Her father is dead. She has an uncle, a priest, the Bonze, "a miracle of wisdom." The lieutenant sighs at the thought of the priest. Another uncle is famed only as a good-for-nothing tippler. "One thinker and one drinker" fall to the lot of the venturesome bridegroom.

Then are announced the officials of the wedding: the Imperial High Commissioner, the Official Registrar, followed by the relations, all entering the terrace with great ceremoniousness, obsequious oriental bowing and unsparing compliments.

The American officer is bored with the farce procession of the motley set, while the Consul warns him of its tragedy. He cautions Pinkerton not to look on this marriage contract and the girl's faith as a pastime.

Butterfly's party exhibit universal traits in their chatting, their criticism of the bridegroom, their petty jealousies of the bride. But at Butterfly's presentation they all bow low upon the earth.

Pinkerton finds a relief from all these foolish people in the refreshment tables, loaded with delicacies, to which they all rush with a relish, leaving him a few moments alone with his dear little Butterfly.

She is anxious to show Pinkerton some keepsakes she has brought with her. She takes from her sleeve

"Kerchiefs, a pipe, a buckle,
A colored ribbon,
A mirror and a fan;"

also a little jar of paint, which she throws away at the officer's expression of dislike for it; then a most sacred relic, a dagger, which she unsheaths most reverently. Goro, the wife vender, steals to his side and explains that the dagger was sent by the Mikado to her father, with a command to which he was obedient. Goro imitates the suicide by appearing to rip open his bowels. It is called *hara-kiri*, and is imposed by the Mikado on criminal officers of the Japanese government.

Then she exhibits for his veneration the Ottoki, small images of the souls of her forefathers. She now confides to him that for his sake she has changed her religion. Yesterday she had crept softly to the American mission and, unknown to all her friends and relations, had adopted his religion. She had followed her fate and now bows to the God of her dear master.

He had given for her a hundred yen, and now she picks up her images and dashes them away from her—for him she can almost forget her race and people!

Pinkerton has not time to assimilate the force of this, her vow, as Goro, in loud voice, calls all the company to silence, to hear the Imperial Commissioner read the marriage contract:

“Leave is given to the undersigned,
Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton,
Lieutenant, serving on the gunboat
Abra'm Lincoln, of the United States Navy,
Of North America;
And to the spinster, known as Butterfly,
Inhabitant of Omara-Nagasaki,
Hitherto single, and, in consequence,
Never divorced,

To join in bonds of wedlock; to wit,
The former of his free accord and will,
The latter with consent of her relations,
Witnesses of the contract."

The contract is signed, and as Cho-Cho-San's friends gather around and congratulate the bride as Madam Butterfly, she corrects them: "Nay, Madam B. F. Pinkerton."

The officials are now all off, and as the relatives and friends are drinking a toast to the newly married couple, the whole company is thrown into consternation by the arrival of the Bonze, the Japanese priest, Butterfly's uncle.

He has learned that she has renounced her religion at the mission, and now his weird fanatical figure strides into the marriage scene and denounces her—

"In everlasting torment
May your wicked soul perish!"

All is thrown into confusion. All of Butterfly's connections join with the mad priest in his anathemas.

Pinkerton finds this a very convenient way of getting rid of the entire set so distasteful to him. He declares himself master of the house. They all hasten away and rush down the hillside, hurling back their threats and curses upon the girl.

Butterfly stands at first mute, and then breaks down in hearty, childish tears. The lieutenant easily heals her heart, wounded at the croaking of the frogs. His words of assurance and love fall like gentle balm on her poor heart, and she stoops to kiss his hand.

Evening has come. Night has settled in with its serene, star-lit sky. They hear, within, Suzuki murmuring her evening prayer. Pinkerton claps his hands, summoning the servants, has them close the partitions and arrange all for the night. Suzuki helps Butterfly exchange her wedding garment for a pure white robe.

She is now very happy, though she has been renounced by all who once had loved her. Pinkerton is entranced by her witchery—her tresses of brown now falling over her spotless gown. They sit on the terrace in their first love communion, alone.

She is like a little moon goddess, who has come down by night "from her bridge in the star-lighted sky." She at first fears to tell him of her love, lest she should die. Once she did not know him—"A stranger from America, a foreigner, a barbarian!" But now he is her whole world—so strong, so handsome!

Now I am happy; Ah, love me a little,
Oh, just a very little,
As you would love a baby;
'Tis all I ask for.
I come of a race
Accustomed to little,
Grateful for a love that's silent,
Light as a blossom,
And yet everlasting
As the sky, as the fathomless ocean."

Kissing her hand the strong man feels her rightly named—Butterfly, a gossamer creation. His conception of her as a butterfly leaves a sting couched in his words, unconscious except to her. She draws away her hand, and, with a slight cloud over her face, sings—

"They say that in your country,
If a butterfly is caught by man,
He'll pierce its heart with a needle,
And then leave it to perish!"

Pinkerton dissipates the tragic in her momentary prophetic fear. As he embraces her he sings—

"See, I have caught you,
I hold you as you flutter,
Be mine."

She yields to him her whole soul: "Yes, yours forever." He points her romantic spirit to the heavens. She is enraptured:

"Ah! night of rapture! stars unending!
Never have I seen such glory . . .
Every star that shines afar
Is gazing on us, lighting up our future."

(The couple disappear within the interior. Curtain.)

(Continued in Lesson No. 2).

Siegel-Myers Correspondence School of Music
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

A COURSE OF LESSONS IN GRAND OPERA
by NATHANIEL I. RUBINKAM, Ph. D.

Examination Paper for Lesson No. 1

Puccini and His Opera *Madam Butterfly*

Name..... { Class Letter and No.....
Account No.....

Town State..... Percentage.....

Write name, address and numbers plainly. Fill in "Account No." only when it appears on your Lesson Ticket.

1. Give the country, province, city and date of Puccini's birth.

2. Name his first six operas.....

3. On what drama was Madam Butterfly founded?

4. Where, and at what date, did Puccini get his inspiration for the Music Drama?

5. Name three of the characters of this opera capable of being expressed in Music.....

6. The mingling of what two elements show its international characters?

7. Where are the scenes laid?

(OVER)

8. Of whom did Lieutenant Pinkerton buy his Japanese wife, and at what price?
9. What warning does this opera give as to the relation of travelers with foreigners?
10. What oriental characteristics do the foreigners show on introduction, which is tiring to the American?
11. What does the Consul see in this Japanese wife-buying of Pinkerton?
12. Is Sharpless attracted by Goro's collection of wife-candidates?
13. How does Pinkerton regard this marriage contract?
14. Had Cho-Cho-San always been a geisha, or dancing girl?
15. What was Butterfly's view of her marriage with Pinkerton?
16. What had she done at the American Mission?
17. How was her act regarded by her uncle, the Bonze?
18. What prophetic fear does she express?
19. How does she express her absolute devotion?

Siegel-Myers
Correspondence School of Music
Chicago, Illinois

A Course of Lessons *in the Study of*
Grand Opera

By Nathaniel I. Rubinkam, *Ph. D.*



• Lesson No. 2
Giacomo Puccini and His Opera, *Madam
Butterfly*, in Two Lessons
Part Two

Madam Butterfly

ACT II—SCENE I

Inside Butterfly's Little House



THREE years have elapsed. We are again in the little house of Cho-Cho-San. She and her faithful maid Suzuki are waiting, expecting, hoping for the arrival of Pinkerton, who has been absent in America since the first week of their marriage. Suzuki's prayers before the image of Buddha have been without avail. Butterfly cannot tell whether her husband's God knows where they are dwelling. They are nearing starvation. Only a few coins are left. Butterfly is pathetically strong in her trust. She remembers that Pinkerton, before he went away, in reply to her earnest inquiry, said:

"O Butterfly, .
My tiny little child-wife,
I'll return with the roses,
The warm and sunny season,
When the red breasted robins
Are busy nesting."

She makes Suzuki repeat with her the lines of assurance, "He'll return," "he'll return." She rebukes the weeping maid, and in her mind's eye she sees the approaching ship:

"Hear me. One fine day we'll notice
A thread of smoke arising on the sea
In the far horizon,
And then the ship appearing;
Then the trim white vessel
Glides into the harbour, thunders forth her cannon.

See you? He is coming!
I do not go to meet him. Not I. I stay
Upon the brow of the hillock and wait, and wait
For a long time, but never weary
Of the long waiting.
From out the crowded city
There is coming a man—
A little speck in the distance.
I, without answering,
Hold myself quietly concealed,
A bit to tease him, and a bit so as not to die
At our first meeting; and then, a little troubled,
He will call, he will call:
‘Dear baby-wife of mine, dear little orange-blossom!’”

Her innocence is pathetic as she says to Suzuki:
“This will all come to pass, just as I tell you. Banish
your idle fears, for he’ll return; I know it.”

Sharpless has a letter from the American officer.
He and Goro arrive at the top of the hill to visit her, and
he greets her as *Madam Butterfly*. “Nay, *Madam Pinkerton*,” she naively replies. She is so sure that all is
well that when she hears a letter has come, her joy
hinders the Consul from reading to her its contents.

“I’m the happiest
Woman in Japan. Would you
Answer me a question? * * *
At what time of year
Do robins nest in America?”

Goro, the wife broker, interrupts, by introducing,
as he has done a half dozen times before, a suitor, the
much married, much divorced, wealthy *Yamadori*. The
broker explains that his zeal has been for the purpose of
relieving her poverty, which he knows is very trying.

But Butterfly utterly scorns him and the importunate applicant.

"Now he offers me riches
If I will wed an idiot."

The Consul cannot get an opportunity to read his message. Goro explains that she has a right to divorce because of desertion. "That may be Japanese law," sings Butterfly, "but not in my country." "Which one?" "The United States."

After the wealthy Yamadori is finally disposed of and goes off sighing, the Consul hopes he may read the letter. Butterfly seats herself, merrily expectant, beside him. But she first seizes it from him, kisses it, presses it to her heart, and hands it back to him, all intent. "Dear friend, I beg of you, seek out that child, that pretty flower." "Does he truly say that?" she joyously sings. "Yes, he truly says so, but if you interrupt so——" Again she listens: "Those were happy days together; three years have gone by since——" "Then he, too, has counted!" she sings with impatient joy. He reads on: "And perhaps Butterfly remembers me no more." "I not remember?" she sings, as though scandalized at the idea. "Suzuki, tell him quickly."

He continues: "If she still cares for me and expects me——" "Oh what glorious tidings!" she cries, and snatching and kissing the letter. "On you I am relying to act discreetly, and with tact and caution to prepare her——" "He's coming!" she interrupts. "For the shock." "Tell me quickly," she cries, clapping her hands. The Consul is overcome at the sight of her child-like trust, which will not understand, so he puts the letter in his pocket, exclaiming to himself: "That

fiend of a Pinkerton!" Then he looks her straight in the eye, and asks very seriously: "What would you do, tell me, Madam Butterfly, if he were never to return again?" Butterfly is stunned as by a death blow. Then, with the submissiveness of a child: "Two things I might do; go back (as a geisha girl) and entertain the people with my songs—or else—better—to die."

The Consul risks wounding her almost to despair by commending her to accept the suit of the wealthy Yamadori. But she quickly recovers: "Ah! am I forgotten!" she sings, as she rushes into an adjoining room, and brings out her baby on her shoulder, setting it down before him full of pride: "Look here, look here! Can such as this well be forgotten?" "Is it his?" inquires the Consul, annoyed. She replies, indicating its features—

"What Japanese
Baby was ever born with azure eyes?
Such lips, too? and such a head
Of golden curls?"

Sharpless sees in the child Pinkerton's very image. "Has he been told?" "No," she replies:

"But you will write and tell him
There awaits him a son, who has no equal!
And would you tell me then, that he won't hasten
Over land and over sea."

Kissing the child fondly she points to the Consul, and, as though speaking to the child—

"What that bad man
Had heart to fancy!
That your mother should take you on her shoulder
And forth should wander in rain and tempest,
Through the town, seeking to earn enough
For food and clothing. * * *

And there will pass a band of valiant warriors,
With their emperor, to whom I'll say:
'Noble ruler, tarry thy footsteps
And deign to stop and look
At these blue eyes, as blue as the azure heaven,
Whence you, Most High, are come!' * * *
Who knows? he'll make of you
The most exalted ruler of his kingdom."

The Consul, deeply agitated with pity, takes up the child, hugs him passionately and asks, "Darling, what do they call you?" "Tell," sings Butterfly, "My name is Trouble * * * but when my father comes it will be Joy." The Consul goes, promising to tell its father.

Now Butterfly and the maid are all alone. A cannon shot is heard in the harbour. Butterfly and Suzuki rush to the terrace. They look seaward. "White—white—the American Stars and Stripes—'tis putting into port to anchor." She takes the telescope and, with trembling hand, searches the harbour with it:

"Keep my hand steady
That I may read the name,
The name, the name. Here it is, Abraham Lincoln.
They were all liars! Liars! Liars! But I
Knew it always—I—who love him.
Now do you see the folly of your doubting?
He's coming! He's coming!
Just at the moment you all were saying,
Weep and forget him. My love wins the day!
My love and faith have won completely—
He's here—he loves me!"

With sobs mingled with laughter she bids Suzuki to adorn all with flowers.

They go to the cherry tree on the terrace and shake it, covering the ground with blossoms. Flowers must

be everywhere at his coming: "As close as stars in the heavens. All peach, violet, jessamine, every spray of gorse, of grass, or flowering tree." She wants the balmy breath of spring to shed its sweetness on his arrival. She has given her tears to the earth and it has returned her flowers. Roses shall adorn the threshold: "Sprays of scented, sweet verbena, and the petals of all flowers." She herself must be adorned. "Suzuki, make me pretty, make me pretty." All her relations, and the Bonze who cursed her, shall be surprised. She must put on her wedding garment:

"I will have him see me in it
As on my marriage day.
In my hair we will put
A scarlet poppy."

In the meantime night has fallen. The shoshi (the partition) is closed. Without there is radiant moonlight. Butterfly makes three holes in the shoshi—one near the floor for the baby to look through, another, also low, for the reclining Suzuki, and one higher up, where Butterfly stands and looks for the coming of Pinkerton. She stands rigid and motionless—gazing through the shoshi.

It is now night. Within from far off one hears a humming. The baby and then Suzuki fall asleep. The tapers slowly burn out, leaving the room flooded with

The chief interpreter of *Madam Butterfly* in America today is Miss Geraldine Farrar, an American grand opera singer, born in Massachusetts, educated in Berlin and Paris, and since 1906 a member of the Metropolitan Grand Opera Company in New York.

When I first studied the libretto of *Madam Butterfly*, I had before me Dupont's photograph of Miss Farrar and the little

moonlight, which gradually grows into the cold, grey light of dawn: but Butterfly watches on. The curtain falls slowly with soft music.

Act II—Scene 2

The Same
Orchestral Intermezzo

As the curtain rises, one hears voices from without in the far distance—then sounds of anchors and chains from the harbour. Butterfly is standing, still motionless, gazing through the shoshi. The dawn breaks, sunshine streams in. Butterfly rouses, as from a dream, awakes her maid and takes up the baby in her arms.

Her first words to her maid, are, "He'll come, he'll come. I know he'll come." She goes off, carrying the sleeping child up the staircase, singing a soft lullaby:

"Sweet, thou art sleeping,
Cradled on my heart;

baby boy "Trouble," left by the thoughtless naval officer in the far-away Japan, while he was wedding a real American wife, Kate Pinkerton, in his homeland. It was an idea touching to tears.

When I saw the music-drama in the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago, children had been disallowed on the stage, and it was a terrible disillusion to see a large, flaxen-haired doll in the place of the living child. In spite of the splendid acting and singing of Miss Farrar, the affecting tragedy was to me changed into a comedy. When, later, I saw the same opera given by the Aborn Company, in McVicker's Theatre, the baby was left largely to the imagination by concealment in a carriage and by being thrown into shadows, and so the illusion was restored. This shows that there are stage devices which can obliterate the ridiculous elements and keep active the tragic spirit of the drama, even though a living child is impersonated by a doll.

Safe, in God's keeping,
While I must weep apart.
Around thy head the moonbeams dart:
Sleep, my beloved!"

Pinkerton and the Consul knock and enter. Suzuki tells the American officer how Butterfly had scanned every vessel which had in three years entered the harbour, its flags and colors—how she had stood through all last night. "Did I not tell you?" the Consul rebukes. They notice the flowers all about.

The lieutenant is deeply touched. His conscience speaks: "Oh torment!" When the maid learns that the woman walking about the garden is Pinkerton's American wife she sinks to the floor and sings:

"Hallowed souls of our fathers!
Ah, the world is plunged in gloom!"

Pinkerton wandering about the room becomes more and more agitated. He notes every detail. The flowers give bitter fragrance and poison. He picks up his portrait. "Here is my likeness. Three years have passed away. And every day, every hour, she counted!" He puts a purse of money in Sharpless hands. The Consul repeats the warning he once had spoken. He had told the truth when he once painted how she believed him.

Now, in a single moment he realizes his whole, heartless action. He feels he cannot stay in the place of such terrible reproaches:

"Farewell, O happy home,
Farewell, home of love.
Haunted forever I shall be
By her reproachful eyes * * *
Like a coward, ah! let me fly!
Farewell, I cannot stay. Farewell!"

He wrings the Consul's hand and rushes away.

Butterfly comes down stairs in the joyful excitement of expectation. She looks about the corners of the room, thinking he is hiding from her in play. Seeing the Consul, she becomes alarmed. "And where is—where is——? Not here." Looking up she sees Mrs. Kate Pinkerton. "Who are you? Why have you come here?" She awakes only gradually to the situation. The American wife feels the terrible pathos of it all. It is only when she tells Butterfly that she has been married to Pinkerton for a year, that the Japanese girl says resignedly: "It is all over now." Mrs. Pinkerton asks her if she cannot forgive her, and Butterfly solemnly replies:

"'Neath the blue vault of the sky
There is no happier lady than you are.
May you remain so, nor e'er be saddened through me.
Yet it should please me greatly
That you should tell him
That peace will come to him."

She promises to yield up the child if Pinkerton will himself come and fetch him—climb this hill in a half hour from now.

"Like to a poor, imprisoned bird,
Beats this little fluttering heart!"

sings Suzuki as she tries to support the crushed young woman. Butterfly, somewhat rallied, sings—

"How runs the ditty? Through closed gates he entered;
Life and love entered with him.
Then he went—and nought was left to us.
Nothing, nothing, nothing but death."

Sending her maid away, Butterfly lights a lamp in front of the Buddha statue. She lifts from it the white

veil, which she throws across the screen. She then takes the dagger, which, in a waxen sheath, leans against the wall near the image. She kisses the blade and, holding it up by point and handle, reads off its inscription:

"To die with honor,
When one can no longer live with honor."

She indicates, by pointing it to her throat, that this is her fate.

She eagerly enfolds, kisses and sings to the child, which Suzuki pushes in to her:

"You, my beloved idol!
Adored being! Fairest
Flower of beauty * * *
Though you ne'er must know it,
'Tis for you I'm dying,
I, poor Butterfly,
That you may go away
Beyond the ocean,
Ne'er to feel the torments, when you are older,
That your mother forsook you * * *
Take one last careful look
At your poor mother's face!
That its memory may linger,
Even though it be dim and faint.
Let not my beauty's lingering bloom
Be faded quite!
Farewell, beloved—
Go—play—play!"

She puts in his hands a little American flag and a doll, to play. She disappears behind the screen. One hears the dagger fall. She emerges with the veil tied around her neck. She strides feebly, smilingly, toward the child and falls beside him.

Pinkerton's voice is heard, "Butterfly! Butterfly!" As he and Sharpless hasten in to her, she points to her child with meaning gesture, and dies.

The curtain descends upon a drama whose action is its own commentary.

Other peoples may be different from us. They are different in color, in custom, in culture, in religion. But in the soul's universal traits—in love, in passion—they are the same. Humanity is one. Let us beware of trifling with universal, essential traits. What Pinkerton played as a passing episode, *Madam Butterfly* played with pure, deep, eternal sentiment. Hence the life tragedy.



Siegel-Myers Correspondence School of Music
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

A COURSE OF LESSONS IN GRAND OPERA
by NATHANIEL I. RUBINKAM, Ph. D.

Examination Paper for Lesson No. 2

Puccini and His Opera *Madam Butterfly*

Name..... { Class Letter and No.....
Account No.....

Town State..... Percentage.....

Write name, address and numbers plainly. Fill in "Account No." only when
it appears on your Lesson Ticket.

1. What interval of time elapsed between Act I and Act II?

.....

2. In what condition do we find Cho-Cho-San at the opening of
the second act?

.....

.....

.....

3. Does she despair of Pinkerton's return even after all of her
suffering?

4. Does she easily understand the letter which Pinkerton has
written to the Consul?

5. How does she regard the attempt of Sharpless and Goro to
have her marry the wealthy Yamadori?

.....

.....

.....

6. What is the name of Butterfly's child?

7. Is it a symbol?

(OVER)

8. How does Butterfly prepare for the coming of Pinkerton?
.....
.....
.....
9. With what touching picture does Scene 1 of Act II end? ..
.....
.....
.....
10. Is she still entirely hopeful and without suspicion?
11. How is Suzuki affected on seeing Pinkerton's American wife?
.....
.....
.....
12. What are Pinkerton's feelings as he looks about the little home?
.....
.....
.....
13. What beautiful spirit does Butterfly show when she sees Kate Pinkerton and realizes that it is all over?
.....
.....
.....
14. What does she now resolve?
.....
.....
15. What motto does she read on the *hara-kiri* dagger?.....
.....
.....
.....
16. What is the *motif* of this Music Drama?
.....
.....
.....

Siegel-Myers
Correspondence School of Music
Chicago, Illinois

A Course of Lessons *in the Study of*
Grand Opera

By Nathaniel I. Rubinkam, Ph. D.



"Without hope's priceless treasure 'tis better far to die."
Radames, Act IV, Scene 2.

Lesson No. 3
Giuseppe Verdi and His Opera Aïda
in Two Lessons
Part One

Verdi and His Opera Aïda

Verdi



THE splendor and pride of the Italian Opera reached its height in the nineteenth century in the musical career of Giuseppe Verdi.¹ Born at Roncole, Italy, in the same year with Richard Wagner, in Germany, in 1813, Verdi had, at the writing of *Aïda*,² attained the summit of a well-deserved fame. He had for more than a third of a century poured forth a continued stream of music-dramas—at least twenty-five—among them *Ernani* (1844), *Rigoletto* (1851), *Il Trovatore* (1853), *La Traviata* (1853) and *Don Carlos* (1867).

Aïda was produced in 1871, when the eminent artist was nearing three-score years. Two of his greatest works were still to come from his pen, *Otello* (1877), and *Falstaff* (1893)—the marvel of youthfulness and comedy—when he had reached four-score years. He had been long known as the *Grand Old Man* of music.

Verdi died at Busseto, Italy, in 1902, in his ninetieth year, after one of the most glorious life-courses in the annals of musical history.

His people's recognition of his genius, gratitude for his services, and honor to his memory are to be expressed by a national monument, the foundations of which are to be laid at Rome, October 10, 1913, on the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of his birth.

Aïda is an Egyptian music-drama, and has a permanent value in the cultural history of art. This is not only because it is one of the greatest masterpieces of one of the most remarkable musical geniuses of modern

¹ Pronounced Joo-sep'-peh Vair'-dee.

² Pronounced Ah-ee'-dah.

times; it has an abiding interest in that it was composed at the order of one of the reigning world-monarchs, Ismail Pasha,¹ of Egypt.

The Suez Canal had been completed, and the new Italian Opera house at Cairo had been opened. The Khedive² was not only deeply and financially interested in the maritime enterprise, but was also an earnest patron of art. He had in his hands the theme of an opera, or music-drama. A prose story had been written for it, by Mariette Bey, the famous Egyptologist, director of the Boulak Museum at Cairo, which contains the treasures of the excavations which reveal Egypt's story of its past. As the tale was culled from ancient manuscripts, we might call it a historic drama, perhaps as historical, or pre-historical, as most of such creations are. It is true in its ideas, if not in the literalness of its story.

The tale was rendered into verse by the French poet, M. Camille de Locle, and an Italian libretto was prepared by Sig. A. Ghislanzoni.

The Khedive communicated with Verdi, the most famous of the Italian contemporary dramatic musicians, and requested him to compose the music. The monarch readily acceded to the artist's price of one hundred thousand francs (twenty thousand dollars), with liberal allowances for expenses and rights of production in all countries outside of Egypt. This is an example of the art-patronage which has helped genius to flourish in the Old World.

Verdi wrote a work of marvelous, oriental, sensuous color, adapted to the antique scenery. The scene-settings

¹ Pronounced Pash-ah'.

² Pronounced Kay-deev'.

and costumes were designed by the scholar, Mariette Bey, and were manufactured in Paris.

The Franco-Prussian war was in progress. When the furnishings were completed Paris was under siege, and it required much diplomatic manœuvring to get them all to Egypt; but finally the enterprise succeeded. This is a suggestive commentary on the value set upon musical art beyond the seas.

The Pasha expected the distinguished Italian to come to Egypt to conduct the rehearsals, and to lead the orchestra at the presentation in Cairo. But Verdi, then nearing sixty years of age, was too timid to cross the Mediterranean, which gives us a hint of the artist's imagination as to the terrors of the great waters. Some of us on a voyage from Italy to Alexandria have experienced the perils of this great inland sea when a storm is raging.

When the grand opera of *Aïda* was first publicly presented, on December 24, 1871, at Cairo, there were present the nobilities of the court and the art-connoisseurs of the European world. Tickets were in such demand that every possible seat was ordered two weeks before the performance.

The populace was very curious to see the turbans at the theatre. Three *loges* were filled with the harem of the Khedive.

The spectacle on the stage was most brilliant, and *Aïda* was universally conceded to be the masterpiece of the master.

Aïda soon became a favorite opera in all European lands. Adelina Patti, the greatest lyric *tragedienne* of her day, first played the chief character in England in 1876, and the opera has held the American stage steadily

since 1883. Its title role has attracted the energies of the most talented interpreters, among whom are Gadski, Melba, Emma Eames and Nordica, with such artists as Grossi, Louise Homer and others, in the exacting role of Amneris,¹ the princess of Egypt.

Foreword

The scenes of this opera are laid in those pre-historic days, when wars and invasions were common between Egypt and Ethiopia, the semi-barbaric land lying to the south. There is war between the Pharaoh and the Hyksos,² or Shepherd Kings of Ethiopia.

Aïda is an Ethiopian captive at the court of Egypt. She, and all the other Ethiopians, are represented as of dark, copper-colored, semi-barbaric type, in contrast to the white race of the Egyptians. She is, however, so beautiful and so gentle that she is given as a handmaid to the princess, Amneris, daughter of the Pharaoh.

Amneris greatly admires her slave. The princess' good opinion is, however, turned to jealousy when she detects that Radames,³ the soldier and warrior whom she loves, is enamoured, not so much of the mistress as of the maid.

The Drama is the story of the affinity between a hero of the white race and a beautiful woman and slave of the copper-colored clan, the enemy of his people.

The world has certainly progressed since the early days of Egypt, but, through millions of revolutions of the

¹ Pronounced Am-ney'-ris.

² Pronounced Hik'-sos.

³ Pronounced Rah'-dah-meas.

planets, these three things still remain as perpetual verities—always the same—war, jealousy and love. *Aïda* is a music drama of war, jealousy and love.

The Music of *Aida*

To what degree the music of Verdi in this later work is under the spell of Wagner, is the dispute of musical critics. The preface to a piano-score of *Aïda* says: "The Italian opera under Verdi's pen is no longer a collection of pretty cavatinas, arias, duets, and more or less concerted pieces, but a living, lyric drama, in which the music, as far as theatrical exigencies permit, closely follows the action, the whole being more tersely connected than in the productions of most of his predecessors. But, notwithstanding his adoption of the new idea of reform, all his works are full of fascinating, free and original melody."

Mr. F. J. Crowest, in his work on Verdi, says of *Aïda*: "In the nineteen numbers of which the opera consists there is much that is musically novel and beautiful. The descriptive music, especially when removed from the tragic parts of the work, shows the composer in his happiest mood. The emotional (even sensational) nature of the music, too, is very marked, and this is where the master, retaining his country's manner, rises triumphantly over French and German dramatic music. * * * Both vocal and instrumental music aimed at that illustrative local color which the book and situation needed; hence the lavish use of Oriental scales, Persian songs, the dance of black boys, with all the resplendent paraphernalia of Eastern temple, pagoda and palace."

The following are the beautiful lines of Wagnalls on the prelude and closing music of the opera.

"A tender, wistful strain, high up in the violins, forms the opening of the prelude. With this first, faint phrase the composer seems to awaken the muse of Egyptian music from her long sleep. * * * The conductor's wand gently disperses these clinging meshes of sound, the curtain is lifted, and we are ushered into the musical life of an ancient civilization. * * * Instead of closing with a crescendo, as do most operas, the *finale* of Aïda becomes ever softer and fainter, like a departing spirit. The brass and wood instruments have long since retired; only the violins and harp keep up a gentle, vibrating accompaniment like the flutter of a cherub's wings. The curtain descends very slowly, and the last notes of the violin are doubly pianissimo. The muse of Egyptian music glides away as silently as she came."



Aïda

An Opera in Four Acts.
 Libretto by A. Ghislanzoni.
 Music by Giuseppe Verdi.
 Persons in the Drama :

Aïda, an Ethiopian slave.....Soprano
 Amneris, Daughter of the King of Egypt.....Mezzo-Soprano
 Radames, Captain of the Egyptian Guards.....Tenor
 Amonasro, King of Ethiopia, Aïda's father.....Baritone
 Ramphis, High Priest of Isis.....Bass
 King of Egypt (the Pharaoh).....Bass
 A Messenger.....Tenor
 Priests, Priestesses, Captains, Soldiers, Functionaries,
 Slaves, Ethiopian Prisoners, Egyptian People, etc.

Place, Memphis and Thebes.

Time, During the reign of the Pharaohs.

Synopsis of the Play:

- Act I. (1) In the Palace of the King at Memphis.
 (2) Interior of the Temple of Ptah at Memphis.
 Act II. (1) Amneris' apartments at Memphis.
 (2) Entrance gate to the City of Thebes.
 Act III. Shores of the Nile—Temple of Isis.
 Act IV. (1) Hall in the King's Palace.
 (a) Subterranean Hall of Justice.
 (b) Prison of Radames.
 (2) Temple of Ptah.
 (a) Upper floor.
 (b) The Crypt.

Act I

In the first act Radames, the Egyptian soldier and hero, is placed at the head of the army, to meet a new invasion from Ethiopia. He is to fight against the King and the fatherland of Aïda. His heart thirsts not only to

win fame as a warrior, but to set free Aïda, the Ethiopian captive, torn from her ancestral home, and with whom he has formed a secret and an undying attachment. He will lift her from her disgrace, and make her his bride. This is to him a goal worthy of his noblest striving.

Scene I.—The opening scene is in the palace of the Pharaoh at Memphis, a few miles south of our present Cairo. We see its colonnades, its statues, and beds of tropical flowers. It is on the west side of the Nile river. One looks through the Palace upon the Memphis temples, with the giant pyramids in the background.

Ramphis, the priest of Isis, has consulted the oracle of the mother-goddess, and it is revealed that Radames is the divinely appointed leader of the Egyptian hosts, to resist the enemy which is invading the Nile's fertile valley and threatening the hundred-gated Thebes, four hundred and eighty miles to the south.

The hero is enthused with joy and hope. He sings his great aria of the first act to Aïda, for whom he will battle and triumph:

"Radiant Aïda, beauty resplendent,
Mystical blending of flowers and light,
Queenly thou reignest o'er me transcendent,
Thou of my life art the splendor bright.
Back to thy clear skies I would restore thee,
To the soft airs of thy native land;
Garlands imperial I would place o'er thee.
Build thee a throne next the sun to stand."

Radames knows not yet that this captive girl is a princess, the child of the Ethiopian King.

Scene 2.—Amneris is suspicious of Radames' love for another. The Egyptian princess, the young, beautiful daughter of the Pharaoh, enters to the hero. She is

inflamed with love for him. She asks him to unfold the secret of his thoughts. She is mistrustful that there are in his soul sweeter hopes than those of military honor and fame, that some other vision, more entrancing, has found favor in his heart. Is there not in Memphis a greater lodestone to attract his being?

Radames fears she has divined his love for the slave, Aïda. Have his eyes betrayed his secret? The princess sees that he is deeply agitated.

Scene 3.—Then follows a beautiful *terzetto* between Radames, Aïda and Amneris. The suspicion on the part of the princess has grown into jealousy. She sings:

“Ne’er lover gazed with more enraptured eyes!”

Is it possible that her maid vies with her as a rival to her love?

In order to ferret out the secret, she feigns an affection for her slave; she calls her “sister.” She will learn the reason of Aïda’s flowing tears. The captive says she weeps because of the din of strife between Egypt and her native land.

But the princess is dissatisfied with this solution. Is there no deeper woe which bids her tears flow? She will find a more subtle cause of the tearful blush that starts in the slave. She bids her tremble if an affection for Radames be detected.

Radames and Aïda feel together that woe would fall on them both forever should Amneris discover their love. She would dash in pieces his deeply-laid plans.

Scene 4.—The Pharaoh enters, with a procession, in great state. He is followed by Ramphis, the priest of Isis, ministers, captains and officers. He declares the cause is mighty which has summoned around him the faithful sons of Egypt.

A messenger brings in the news, and describes the character of the Ethiopian invasion. The fertile fields are devastated, the harvests along the Nile destroyed. The plundering hordes, led on by the ferocious, barbaric Amonasro,¹ are marching toward Thebes, the Capital.

As Aïda hears the name of Amonasro, she starts, exclaiming (aside), "My father!"

The messenger reports that Thebes has poured from her hundred gates a torrent force, to meet the invader with relentless carnage.

The King, priests and all the folk are roused to the spirit of war: "Battle! battle! battle!"

Radames is declared, by the revelation of the goddess, Isis, the warrior chief, "with power supreme invested."

"He, leader! I tremble," breathes Aïda, aside.

The Pharaoh dispatches the warriors to the temple of Ptah,² the high war-god, to invest themselves with sacred arms. They shall then march up the Nile, the broad sacred river, to guard the Egyptian shores and to deliver their foes to death.

Radames, who still has no idea that his foe is Aïda's father, receives from the hand of Amneris the standard of war.

Aïda is deeply moved. While all the assembly and crowd are shouting: "Battle! battle!" and sending up their prayers that laurels may crown the brow of the chief, she is bowed down in despair. She gives vent to her anguish and opposing emotions in her song of wailing:

¹Pronounced Am-on-az'-ro.

²Pronounced Tah.

"For whom shall I weep? For whom shall I pray?
Ah! What power to him now binds me!
Him must I love, though all tells me
I'm in love with my country's foe."

How can she join in the war-cry which dispatches Radames to the war, and bids him return as the vanquisher of Ethiopia?

"As conqueror, return! What! Can my lips
Pronounce language so impious! Wish him
Victor o'er my father! * * * Wish him conqueror
O'er my brothers!"

In her mind's eye she sees her father, the King, dragged in chains behind the chariot wheels of her lover. She sings, "I Sacri Nomi."

"O sacred names of father and of lover!
I have no power to utter, can ne'er betray!
Abashed and trembling, to heaven would rise,
My prayers for both, for both my tears would fall."

She calls on the gods, in her fatal love, to relieve her woe, and let her die.

Scene 5.—The first act closes with the extraordinary consecration-scene in the temple of Ptah at Memphis, where Radames, with spectacular ceremonies, is invested with the command of the army for his war with the Ethiopians. One is reminded of some imposing ritual in a vast cathedral. There are statues of deities, colonnades, vistas, sacred emblems, an altar, golden tripods and fumes of incense. The Egyptian high god, Ptah—the Hephaestus¹ of the Greeks, the Vulcan of the Latins—is adored by priests and priestesses, as the author of all life, creator from nothing, author of all fruitful things. Ramphis declares him to be both Sire and Son, an uncreated flame.

As Radames, the chosen hero, enters, unarmed, the

¹Pronounced Hay-fes'-tus.

priestesses sing and perform the mystic dances. A silvery veil is draped over the warrior's head. As the guardian of all Egypt, into his hand is placed the sacred sword, the weapon tempered by hand immortal, destined to deal to the foe carnage and ruin.

In a grand musical finale, Ramphis, Radames, Priestesses and Chorus, hail and invoke for protection, the Almighty deity, Ptah.

This shows that the prelude to a bloody war in the old, old world was an elaborate, barbaric, religious ritual. Hymns and mystic dances before the war-god were the inspirations to Radames to meet valiantly his Ethiopian foe.



Act II

Sending the hero forth with such high ritual and ceremonies of consecration, his conquest of Amonasro was confidently expected by every Egyptian. So in the second act we witness the preparations for his triumphant return and his royal reception.

Scene 1.—Amneris, in her apartments, is being attired and adorned by her female slaves for the triumphal festival. Sweet-scented vapors arise from tripods of incense, as the menials bind her tresses with verdant laurels, and a chorus chants the glory of the returning hero. They celebrate, as they believe, the powers of love which bind their princess with Radames. Amneris prays that joy and rapture may be restored to her heart. Black, Moorish slave-boys perform a dance.

But the songs and dances have not allayed her soul-questions, nor soothed her fevered spirit. The princess is tortured by doubt. She dismisses her attendants, and receives Aïda, child of the conquered clan, in order to lay clear the secret.

Scene 2.—Amneris at first feigns pity for her rival, and, with a hypocritical affection, regrets the defeat of her people:

“O hapless Aïda; the sorrows that afflict thee,
Be sure I deeply feel;
I am thy friend,
Thou shalt have all from me—thy days shall happy be.”

Aïda cries out in anguish. As an exile she can never know the fate of her father and her brothers.

The princess tests her by falsely declaring that Radames has been slaughtered. Aïda exhibits her despair and anguish at her lover's fate:

"Hapless me! My tears will forever flow.

The gods have ever from childhood oppos'd me."

Amneris is now sure. She breaks out in violence:

"Tremble! I read thy secret! Thou lovest him! Lie no longer!"

The princess, in order to make her certainty complete, now undeceives the slave. "Radames liveth!"

Aïda kneels and cries with exaltation:

"Liveth! thanks, kind Heaven!"

When she hears that the mighty princess is her rival, she sings:

"Thou my rival! 'tis well! so be it * * *

Ah! let this my sorrow, thy warm heart move;

'Tis true, I adore him with boundless love!"

The triumphal pageant is preparing. Amneris' jealousy now knows no bounds. In the reception of the hero, the princess shall sit on the throne; the vile minion shall bite the dust.

Aïda is broken down in despair. Her life is forsaken and void. Her only escape from the blighting anger of the princess will be the sepulchre. She cries in her woe:

"Oh, forgive!

Soon this love shall be buried in the tomb."

(Continued in Lesson No. 4.)



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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

A COURSE OF LESSONS IN GRAND OPERA
by NATHANIEL I. RUBINKAM, Ph. D.

Examination Paper for Lesson No. 3

Verdi and His Opera Aïda

Name..... { Class Letter and No.....
 { Account No.....

Town State..... Percentage.....

Write name, address and numbers plainly. Fill in "Account No." only when it appears on your Lesson Ticket.

1. Give the dates of the birth and death of Verdi.....

2. Name eight of his principal music-dramas, with their dates

3. Where is the scene of *Aïda* laid?.....

4. Under whose patronage was it written?

5. Name two or three of its chief characters.....

(OVER)

6. Name two or three noted artists who have assumed its roles

.....

7. What is the dramatic motive?.....

.....

.....

8. What have you to say of the music?.....

.....

.....

.....

9. Outline the story of the first act.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

10. How did the people show, in the first scene of Act II, their
confident expectation of the success of Radames?.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Siegel-Myers
Correspondence School of Music
Chicago, Illinois

A Course of Lessons *in the Study of*
Grand Opera

By Nathaniel I. Rubinkam, *Ph. D.*



Lesson No. 4
Giuseppe Verdi and His Opera *Aïda*
in Two Lessons
Part ~~One~~ *Two*

Aïda

ACT II—Scene 2



THE grand *finale* of Act II presents the triumphal entry of Radames into Thebes, after the defeat of the Ethiopians. It is one of the boldest, most elaborate, most spectacular massing of people that had yet been seen on the Italian stage.

We are at the hundred-gated Egyptian capital. Behind the fronded palms on the right is the temple of Ammon Ra, the Greek Helios, the Sun of the ancient Nile worship. To the left is a purple-canopied throne; at the back, by the entrance gate, a triumphal arch.

The Pharaoh enters, with his train. There are officers of state, priests, fan-carriers and color-bearers. Amneris, the princess, seats herself on the throne to the left of the King. Aïda takes her place on the steps to the right, among the slaves.

A great chorus sings a hymn of praise to the goddess-mother, Isis. A choir of women unite in extolling the conqueror:

The laurel with the lotus bound,
The victor's brow enwreathing."

There are dances and mystic songs. A sacerdotal train of priests chant thanks to the gods.

Then follows a march of Egyptian troops, with trumpeters, before the King. A group of dancing girls bear in the spoils of the conquered. There are also war chariots, banners, sacred vessels and images of the gods.

People and priests sing choruses in honor of the brave warrior, and thanks to the gods.

Radames enters, borne under a canopy by twelve officers, amid antiphonal songs describing the glory of Isis and of Egypt.

The King descends from his throne, greets and salutes the victor, as the saviour of his country. On Radames' head, Amneris places a crown of triumph. The Pharaoh swears by his throne and by heaven above to grant any boon the conqueror may request.

Radames asks that the captive prisoners be brought before the King. Among them marches Amonasro, Aïda's father, the Ethiopian King, disguised in the uniform of an officer. He is quickly recognized by his daughter. She rushes wildly to him. She cries:

"What see I? He here? *Mio padre!* (My Father!)"

They embrace, but he cautions her (aside) not to reveal that he is the King. Amonasro presents himself to the Pharaoh as an officer defending in battle his fallen King, and asks grace for the captives. The people join in supplication for the wretched souls.

Ramphis and the priests—who, as a class, are always cruel in universal literature—beg the Pharaoh to beware of mercy. The priests of old made their gods cruel, and the haters of all their foes. Here they beg the King to close his heart to all their captives' supplications.

"By the gods' will they are doomed to perish. * * *
Death be the doom of Egypt's enemies!"

It is a great *ensemble* in which prisoners and priests plead for and against mildness on the part of the King.

Amneris, seeing that during the singing and chant-

ing of this chorus, the eyes of Radames are riveted on Aïda, swears vengeance against her base slave and rival.

Radames pleads for the captives. The priest of Isis again warns the Pharaoh against clemency—at least keep back fair Aïda and her father as pledges of safety and peace; let the rest go free.

The King yields to his priests' counsel. To Radames he again offers reward in payment of debt unbounded. His prize shall be the princess. He shall marry the daughter of the Pharaohs. Hereafter he shall reign over all Egypt. Amneris gloats over her triumph.

Great choruses, both of prisoners and Egyptians, unite with the King:

"Glory to Egypt, sacred land
Isis hath aye protected.
With laurel and with lotus
We'll crown the victor's head."

Radames is not so infatuated with the glories of victory as he is with Aïda, the Ethiopian slave. Like Moses, in the Bible story, he would rather suffer affliction with his Aïda, than enjoy the throne of Egypt with Amneris. He is not yet officially bound to the princess, and while the barbaric Amonasro—Aïda's father, the disguised Ethiopian King—thinks of vengeance, and Aïda, with heart bowed down, laments with sighs and tears the loss of her lover; while the assembled folk, in a chorus of jubilation sing his praise, and Amneris is palpitating with joyful anticipation; the great hero-lover dreams still of thwarting the plan of the court, and of winning his treasure, his first and only affinity, Aïda.

Act III

In the third act Radames incurs the penalty of death for his love, by innocently betraying a secret of war.

Scene 1.—The first scene is played on the shores of the Nile. There are palm-trees and granite rocks. A little temple of Isis is hidden by the foliage. It is a moonlit and starry night.

We hear from within the temple a choral hymn of praise and prayer to the goddess-mother, the guardian of deathless love.

From the river's brink ascend Amneris and Ramphis, the priest, with closely veiled women and guards. The ecclesiastic leads the princess into the temple to supplicate Isis' favor on the eve of her marriage. Amneris sings:

"Yes, and I will pray that Radames may give me
Truly his heart, truly as mine to him
Has ever been sacred."

"Thou shalt pray till the daylight," answers the priest, as they enter the temple, where the chorus repeats the sacred hymn to Isis.

Aïda, closely veiled, enters the grove with greatest caution and trembling. In suspense she waits the coming of Radames. If it is simply a cruel farewell, she has decided to end her fate by a plunge into the Nile's dark and troubled stream. She sings her pathetic aria: Oh, Patria Mia (Oh, native land).

"O native land, thy shores no more shall I behold!
O skies of tender blue, O soft airs blowing,
Where calm and peaceful my early life pass'd o'er.
O hills of verdure, O perfumed waters flowing,
O home beloved. Ah, no more,
I shall see thee never more!

O fresh and fragrant vales, O quiet dwelling,
Promise of happy days of love that bore.
Now hope is banished, love's tender dream dispelling,
O home belov'd, I ne'er shall see thee more!"

Scene 2.—Turning around, she is surprised at seeing Amonasro!

"Heaven! my father."

He has learned the story of her love. He knows her rival is the daughter of the Pharaoh. But he has still hope for her. She shall again gaze on the balmy forests of Ethiopia, on her own verdant valleys and golden temples. She shall have her sceptre, her love, and be the happy bride of her heart's dearest treasure.

"Ah!" cries Aïda, "one day of such enchanting joy; but a single hour of bliss so sweet; then let me die!"

But the conditions of Amonasro! He recalls to her the atrocities of the Egyptians toward the Ethiopians, the desecration of their homes, temples, altars—the heavy chains, and the death of their sisters, daughters, mothers, children and helpless old men! Her subjects have arrived, and are panting for the signal to strike the blow of vengeance.

Only one thing is wanting. They must know the path by which the enemy will march on the morrow. She must get the knowledge from Radames! She must not lose a moment!

Aïda shudders. Must she wrest this secret from her lover? With barbaric fierceness Amonasro paints her crime against her own people, if she does not. How can she call herself his daughter?

As she hesitates, he throws her to the ground. He shows her the threatening, ghostly hands of her dead mother! She passes through a fierce soul-struggle. She

drags herself wearily to her feet. She is decided. She sings:

"Father, their bond-slave I'll be no longer.
Ah! do not appall me with thy curse,
Thine own daughter still mayst thou call me.
Ne'er shall my country disdain its child."

Glad to ecstasy at her decision, the savage King hides himself away among the palm trees, awaiting Radames.

"Courage! he is coming! here I'll remain."

Scene 3.—Radames approaches. He spies her and greets her with jubilation in the song:

"Again I see thee, my sweet Aïda."

He has wandered hither in hope. Although he has been assigned by the Pharaoh to the princess, Amneris, as spouse, as the greatest reward for his valor, Aïda is his affinity, his love, his all! His faith clings still to the possibility of attaining her, and he calls the heavens to witness that he has not forsaken his dream of her:

Aïda questions:

"And how then
Hopedst thou to baffle the princess' love,
The Pharaoh's high behest, the people's hope,
The certain wrath of the priesthood?"

The duet between Aïda and Radames is a great artwork. He reminds her that the Ethiopians, with deadly strife, and unfading hope, have again lighted the war-brand. He hopes, when next the shouts of victory greet him, to reveal his love for Aïda to the Egyptian monarch, and thus claim his Aïda as a guerdon of war. To the maiden, fearing the dread vengeance of Amneris, he swears a sure defense.

Aïda knows a better solution. "Name it!" he cries. She proposes that they fly, together, to her home-land, away from these burning, blighting skies, toward the

virgin forests, where they may forget the world in their blissful love.

Radames, hesitating, yet enthused by her devotion, agrees with rapture, as she sings:

"In my native land, where lavish
Fortune smiles, a heaven awaits us;
Balmy airs, the sense that ravish,
Stray thro' verdant mead and grove.
'Mid the valleys, where nature greets us,
We our bridal bed soon spreading,
Starry skies shall, luster shedding,
Be our canopy above."

As their words of daring flight mingle, Aïda pauses:

"But tell me by what path
Shall we avoid encounter
With the enemy?"

His answer reveals the fatal secret sought by Amonasro:

"By the path we have chosen to fall on the Ethiopians—'twill be vacant until the morrow—the gorges of Napata!"¹

Scene 4.—The savage King springs from his hiding place:

"Gorges of Napata! There will I post my troops!"

Radames discovers, in the barbarian King, Aïda's father. He realizes, instantly, that he has betrayed a war-secret. For his love he has played the traitor.

Aïda and Amonasro try to quiet his fears, but he sees that his name is branded forever. They seek to drag him away, but he has been overheard.

Scene 5.—Amneris, Ramphis, priests and guards rush upon them from the Isis temple.

"Traitor vile!" shouts Aïda's rival.

¹ Pronounced Na-pah'-tah.

Amonasro rushes at the Egyptian princess with a drawn dagger. The madman is stayed by the noble Radames, who sends away the Ethiopian King and Aïda, and delivers himself up to the priest: "Holy father, I yield to thee!"

Act IV

In the closing act, Radames, the victorious warrior, the man who had been glorified by the Pharaoh, and wreathed by the lotus and laurel on the part of the folk, must pay the penalty of treachery to his country.

Scene 1.—This scene is played in the hall of Amneris' father, the Pharaoh.

The princess, in mourning, is crouched by a large portal leading to the Hall of Justice. Another passage opens to the prison where Radames is chained.

Amneris is brooding, in song, over her rival, Aïda, who has escaped. She expects the sentence of traitor to be pronounced by the priesthood upon Radames. Yet he is not a traitor, for his motive was flight—and with *her!* It was desertion!

"They are traitors all and should perish!"

The thought startles her, for she still loves him. The love which he will not requite is destroying her wretched life. She will try once more to win him. She orders him summoned by the guard.

Scene 2.—Amneris offers life to Radames if he will turn to her, to his own Egypt, instead of to the allurements of Ethiopia. But, standing guiltless and pure-hearted, his honour free from stain, he stoutly refuses:

"Without hope's priceless treasure
'Tis better far to die!"

It is a desperate, passionate *duet*. Anneris will surrender to him her country, power, existence, if he will but turn to her arms.

But no, he has staked upon Aïda all that is dearest in life. The princess has given death to Aïda, and yet offers life to him!

She protests that although Aïda's father has perished in the chances of war, *she* still lives, but has vanished.

Radames, after this hopeful message, prays the gods may guide her safely home and keep from her the knowledge that for her he is dying.

Will Radames renounce Aïda, if Amneris will save him from his fate? "No! Never!"

With the consciousness that her cause is entirely lost, the princess falls to cursing him. She is now his mortal foe. She prays to the heavens for vengeance.

To Radames, death is but a joy of living. His reply to all her pleas and threats is a splendid example of fidelity to an affinity, and a gospel to all ages:

"Death is only bliss, pure, unbounded,
Since I die for her I cherish;
In that hour when I shall perish,
With rapt'rous joys my heart will glow;
Thy fierce wrath I fear no longer,
Scorn for thine ire alone I know."

Amneris falls down in rage and anguish. Radames is handed over to the guards.

Scene 3.—The princess revives, alone and desolate. She realizes the ravages which have been made by her atrocious jealousy! She sees the priests—those white-robed, pitiless phantoms, those fatal ministers, and merciless judges—pass into the subterranean Judgment Hall.

She covers her face and writhes in anguish, for she knows what their cruel verdict will be upon the innocent victim.

We hear the priestly prayer that the heavenly spirit may kindle in their hearts the eternal flame of justice. It throws the princess into a flood of sorrow, and she cries to the powers supernal to pity the guiltless.

From the Crypt of Justice is heard the voice of Ramphis, the priest, laying the charge of treachery upon the noble captain. We hear the repeated epithet, "Traitor vile!"

Like a lamb before his shearers, he opens not his mouth. They decide his fate—to be buried alive, beneath the altar in the temple of Ptah!

"'Neath the altar whose God thou'st derided
Thou, a living sepulchre shalt find."

Amneris, horrified at this travesty of justice, at this inhuman verdict, assails the ecclesiastics as they file out of the crypt:

"Priests of heaven! a crime you've enacted!
Tigers, ever in bloodshed exulting,
Laws of earth and the gods insulting."

She repeats her imprecations on Ramphis and his company as they march by.

"Priests of heaven! a crime you've enacted on him,
Whom ye well knew I once treasured.
May a broken heart's curses fall unmeasured,
While his blood on your heads e'er shall lie!
Laws of earth and of heaven ye have outraged,
Ye have punished where no guilt doth lie."

She cries, as they pass out and she is left alone, in despair:

"Impious priesthood, curses light on ye all!
Heaven's vengeance, ere long, upon your heads will fall."

We hear the refrain of the priests now receding until it is lost on our ears:

"A traitor vile is he, and doomed to die!
Traitor vile! Traitor vile!"

Scene 4.—In the final scene, the priests execute the doom which they have pronounced.

The stage is divided into an upper and a lower floor. The section above represents a temple—that of the war-god, Ptah. It is brilliantly illumined, and glitters with golden ornaments.

The lower floor is a subterranean vault, supported by arches and colossal statues of the gods.

Radames is descending the stairway leading into the crypt, and, above, two priests are in the act of letting down the stone which locks him in the subterranean hall, to die.

The scene is called THE FATAL STONE. One can appreciate its terrors only by imagining the sensation of being shut forever from the light of day, to die in a living sepulchre. Radames sings:

"The fatal stone is closed above me!
Now has the tomb engulf'd me!
The light of day no more shall I see!
No more behold Aïda.
Aïda, where art thou now? What'er befalls me
Mayest thou be happy! Ne'er may my frightful doom
Reach thy gentle ear."

In this beautiful, unselfish song he thinks most of Aïda, of her well-being and her hoped-for ignorance of his sorrows.

In the drear space where he imagines himself all alone, in his death-chamber, he hears a groan!

"What moan was that? Is 't a phantom!
Some vision dread? No! 'tis a human being!
Heavens! 'tis Aïda!"

At the sound of her name the noble maiden is aroused as from a dream. In fact, her first word is "*Sonio!*" which, in Italian, means a "dream." (Being pronounced in three syllables, *so-ni-o*, it is translated in English, "Aïda," to fit the music.)

She explains her presence in the prison by her instinct to be near him, and to die with him. She sings:

"My heart foreboded this, thy dreadful sentence,
And to this tomb that shuts on thee its portal,
I crept, unseen by mortal.
Here, free from all, where none can more behold us,
Clasp'd in thy arms, love, I resolved to perish."

Radames is ravished at the thought of this devotion. That she, so pure, so lovely, should doom herself to die with him! He is not able to think that all her beauty could thus fade away forever. Is it true that his passion has been fated to destroy one whom heaven had designed only for love? Those eyes are too beautiful for death!

But Aïda has no sad thought of death, with her lover. Most sweetly she sings:

"Seest thou where death—death, the angel,
Radiantly approaching us,
Would waft us to eternal joys,
On wings of gold, above!
I see heaven's gates are open wide,
Where tears are never streaming,
Where bliss alone, and joy reside,
And never-fading love,
The bliss and joy of never-fading, endless love!"

It is a remarkably dramatic situation. The two souls shut up—the one by a judgment, the other voluntarily—to a living death!

From our outside vantage ground we see and hear the priestesses mystically singing their liturgy to the Almighty Ptah—the breath of all things. From below,

this singing sounds like a mournful chant—the death knell of two beautiful souls.

Radames tries, with his lusty sinews to move away the fatal stone which locks them in; but in vain. Every possible hope of earth is over. They surrender themselves to death. They embrace, and together chant their final song:

“Farewell, O earth! farewell, thou vale of sorrow!
Brief dream of joy, condemned to end in woe!
See brightly ope’s the sky; an endless morrow
There, all unshadowed, evermore shall glow!”

Curtain.

The impression which this drama makes upon us is the deathless power of a real *elective affinity*.

This word, *affinity*, has been basely abused in our common jest, and by the public press. It is one of the strongest, most beautiful and most essential words in our vocabulary. For life-happiness, be sure and get your affinity, and get it the first time. This drama exhibits the superb force and beauty of the word in the case of Radames and Aïda. Nothing could shake them from their first strong anchorage. As Radames sings:

“Without hope’s priceless treasure,
’Tis better far to die.”

It was infinitely better for them to persist, even unto death, than to spend an existence in the living death of an uncongenial wedlock.



By NATHANIEL I. RUBINKAM, Ph. D.

Verdi and His Opera Aida

4. What prize does the King offer Radames?.....

5. What is Radames' hope and determination?

.....

.....

6. Into what guilt is Radames led, in Act III?

.....

.....

.....

7. What desperate attempt does Amneris, the Princess of Egypt,
make, in the second scene of Act IV?

.....

.....

8. What is the verdict against Radames in Act IV, Scene 3? ..

.....

.....

9. What is the name of Act IV, Scene 4?

.....

10. What is the impression which this Music Drama makes on
you?

.....

.....

.....

Siegel-Myers
Correspondence School of Music
Chicago, Illinois

A Course of Lessons *in the Study of*
Grand Opera

By Nathaniel I. Rubinkam, Ph. D.



"Any dramatic production * * * is governed, in the measure of its success, by the closeness of its appeal to the primitive emotions."— *Arnold Daly*

Lesson No. 5
The Music Drama SALOME by Richard Strauss
in One Lesson

Salome



THE music-drama, *Salome*, is the joint creation of two of the most daring artistic spirits of the modern world, Oscar Wilde (1856-1900) and Richard Strauss (1864—).

With Oscar Wilde's poetical career, unfortunate social entanglements, and untimely death, the present generation is well acquainted. No one can deny to the author of "*Lady Windermere's Fan*," "*Salome*," and "*De Profundis*" a touch of real genius.

As for Richard Strauss—this German, Munich-born, and musically-born composer of "*Death and Apotheosis*" (1889), "*Also Sprach Zarathustra*," the piano music to "*Enoch Arden*" (1897-8), "*Feuersnoth*" (1901), the "*Wanderer's Stormsong*," "*Salome*" and "*Electra*," is universally regarded as one of the foremost figures in the musical world today, and already, while still living, has an assured place among the immortals.

From the impression I once received of Oscar Wilde, whom I met in London, and taking him at his oft-quoted word that, in "*Salome*," he only purposed to create "something curious and sensual," I came to this opera three years ago with a prejudice against it. It was severely attacked and ably defended in this country. After giving it a second and third reading, I was compelled, by its single dramatic purpose, its genuine orientalism, and the swift development of its plot, to recognize the positive genius it displays.

I could readily see how such a musical master as Richard Strauss found in the text an opportunity for

orchestral effects in expressing what is primitive and elemental in human emotion.

Salome long haunted the dreams of the poet. He wandered far in search of her model. In her personality he blends chastity and sensuality. The purity of the body and its vital, original and fiercest passions are, in her, wrapped up and united.

Salome was originally written in French for Sarah Bernhardt, but the role was never assumed by this greatest of living tragediennes.

As a drama it held the world's stage ten years (1896-1905) before it was wedded to the Strauss music.

It was performed in Paris (October, 1896) two years before Sudermann's "Johannes," on the same theme, was made public in Berlin. It has since been played in London (May, 1905), in New York (November, 1905), on all the stages of Germany, and in France, Italy and Spain.

It is a sincere tribute to its dramatic possibilities that Richard Strauss saw in the passion, terror and horror which lurked in its theme and is voiced in its poesy, material for his tone-painting to interpret.

Richard Strauss has jocularly been designated Richard II, as he is the logical successor of Richard Wagner. He thoroughly grounded himself in Wagner and in the older classics. It is one of his oft quoted maxims, that "you cannot thoroughly appreciate Wagner unless you pass through this grounding in the classics."

Salome is surcharged with the fateful motives of the Greek tragedies. She is a sister of the Greek Electra, which the romantic Hoffmannthal, of Vienna, has wrought from the immortal tragedy of Sophocles, and which Richard Strauss has since voiced in music.

The musical motives of this opera have been ably interpreted in our country by Dr. Otto Neitzel, the Cologne master of the Musical Art. It is our purpose to dwell chiefly upon its dramatic motives.

Three years ago the role of Salome was ably sung in this country by Mme. Olive Fremstad. At that time it was necessary to defend its production against the many who tried to suppress it.

The character of Salome is now assumed by Miss Mary Garden, whose greatest artistic success has been in the Maeterlinck-Debussy, ethereal, mystical "Melisande."

The Music of Salome

We have in Salome some important additions to the Wagnerian vocabulary of musical speech. There are the Salome Grace *motif*, the Jokanaan prophecy, the yearning of Narraboth, the Wind *motif*, and the Salome Kiss. In order to keep the same rhythmic speech in music, we have, in German, "Ich will deinen Mund küssen;" in French, "Laisse-moi baiser ta bouche;" in English, "Suffer me to kiss thy mouth."*

Like the rumbling and rending of an earthquake, like the clash and crash of colliding railroad trains, like the shattering dissonance of moral and social disaster, the

* The most striking example of the difficulty of translating operas into musical rhythm, is in the last lines of Wagner's "Tristan and Isolde." "The German is "*Unbewusst, höchste Lust*." The literal translation would be "unconscious, highest bliss." But the accent of unconscious is on the second syllable, instead of on the third, in *Unbewusst*. So the translators lead us, in idea, from the sublime to the ridiculous by the translation: "In a kiss, highest bliss."

Strauss music bursts and breaks through the orchestra in rendering this opera of Salome.

At a rehearsal in Prague the composer is said to have stopped the players and cried: "This is too gentle! We want wild beasts here! This is no civilized music; it is music that must crash!"

There are violent antagonisms where two parts of the orchestra are set thundering against each other.

And all of this symbolism of what is cataclysmal—physically, brutally, demoniacally passionate—is founded on the New Testament story of the beheading of John the Baptist, at the request of the daughter of Herodias.

It is objected that this is not art, because of the repulsiveness of the theme. But art is the expression and symbolism of the ideas which have lived and are moving in our human world.

James Russell Lowell, in his introduction to the second part of the "Legend of Brittany," says:

"We enter on our story's *darker* part;
And though the horror of it well may move
An impulse of repugnance in the heart,
Yet, let us think that, as there's naught *above*
The all-embracing atmosphere of art,
So also there is naught that falls *below*
Her generous reach, though grim'd with guilt and woe;
Her fittest triumph is to show that good
Lurks in the heart of evil evermore."



Salome

A Music Drama in One Act

PERSONS IN THE DRAMA :

Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Judea.....Tenor
 Jokanaan, the Prophet.....Baritone
 The young Syrian, Captain of the Guard.....Tenor
 A CappadocianBass
 The page of Herodias.....Contralto
 Herodias, wife of Herod, the Tetrarch.....Mezzo-Soprano
 Salome, daughter of Herodias.....Soprano
 Tigellinus, a young Roman (only in the Drama, not in the Opera).
 Naaman, the executioner.

A slave, the slaves of Salomé, a Nubian, first soldier, second soldier, Jews, Nazarenes, etc.

Scene 1

The Wilde-Strauss "Salome" reduces all of the older massive dramatizations of the John the Baptist story to a single act. There is no change of scenery.

Salome is a musical, dramatic, love-tragedy. The center of interest is not Herod, or John (Jokanaan, as he is called in imitation of the Hebrew), but the beautiful, royal daughter. Every one loves Salome. Her wanton mother, Herodias, loves her; Herod, her stepfather-uncle, loves her; Narraboth, the young Syrian captain, is love-sick over her

Note on pronunciation: The French say Sa-lôme, Germans and English Sa-lō-me; Añ-ti-pas, Teé-trärk, Jo-kā-nan, Ti-jé-lí-nus Nā-a-mān, He-rō-di-as.

He sighingly says, at the opening of the scene, as from the terrace he looks at her in the banquet hall:

"How beautiful is the Princess Salome tonight!
She is like a little princess who wears a yellow veil,
And whose feet are of silver."

But, as we shall see, Salome loves only *one*, and the play portrays her overmastering passion for John the Baptist.

As Salome sits at the banquet, she is enraptured by the voice of the sombre prophet of Judea. The engaging Salome *motif* gives way to the clamorous noise of the Jews at the feast, disputing about their religion.

Jokanaan moves entirely in the Old Testament range of ideas. He clothes his conception of Jesus in the phrases of Old Testament prophecy. He is a man of the desert, where he fed on locusts and wild honey, was clothed in camel's hair, and 'round his loins had a leathern girdle. He was terrible to look upon.

The stern prophet of the wilderness is imprisoned in a cistern, in the grounds of Herod's palace. He is guarded by Roman soldiers.

This old cistern is on the right of the stage, at the back, and is surrounded by a wall of green bronze, to conceal it from view.

The opera is performed on the great royal terrace.

Elevated at the left is the banquet hall, where the king is entertaining his court and devotees. His Roman envoy, Tigellinus, in whose honor the banquet is given, and a few other minor characters in the Wilde drama, do not appear in the opera.

The boisterous hubbub which echoes from the court of revel is met by the prophetic voice of the Baptizer

(Jokanaan), from the dungeon. His first speech announces the Messiah:

"After me shall come One Who is worthier than I;
I am not worthy to unloose the latchet of His shoes."

There is a strange attraction in that hoarse voice, which draws the princess away from her seat at the banquet table.

Scene 2

She comes out upon the terrace. She says:

"I will not stay, I cannot stay."

She cannot bear the

"Mole eyes under the shaking eyelids of the Tetrarch."

She loves the sweet air. She breathes it deeply as she strolls upon the terrace. Within, she had tired of the Jews, tearing each other to pieces over their foolish ceremonies. She could not endure the silent and subtle Egyptians, or the coarse and brutal Romans. She cries: "Ah! how I loathe the Romans!

They are rough and common, and they give themselves the airs of noble lords."

She praises the moon!—its coldness, its chastity. She is interrupted by the voice of Jokanaan, heard again from the cistern-prison. He utters a prophecy of the coming of the Son of Man.

The voice again rivets the attention of the princess. His ideas pierce her soul. They occur at frequent intervals in the play, and are clothed mostly in ancient, Old Testament imagery. Doom and vengeance is their burden. His message would be weakened if it were shaded into love and forgiveness, as it is in Sudermann's "Johannes." Wilde takes no step toward New Testament conceptions.

Wilde, as a dramatist, surpasses his predecessors in this insight of his genius into late Old Testament Judaism.

The austere, unswerving rigidity of Jokanaan's words hypnotizes the princess. When she inquires into his personality and finds that he is the desert-prophet, Jokanaan, she knows only that he is the man of whom the Tetrarch is afraid! He is the one who says fearful things about her mother.

"Yes, he says terrible things about her."

She is transfixed. She will not obey the Tetrarch's will that she return to the banquet hall, nor Narraboth's persuasions. She learns that the prophet is not an old, but a young man.

Now is heard another prophetic utterance from the prison. The maiden is rooted, amazed, at the speech of the strange man, which rises so mysteriously from the depths. One can easily see the woman's infatuation. At the play one realizes its steady growth.

Salome now wishes to speak with the prophet. This, in the mind of the guard, is impossible. The Tetrarch has forbidden all communication with the prisoner. Not even the high priest has access to him. To interview him is out of the question!

Forbidden fruit always feeds the desire—especially in the princess, Salome, who is not inclined to obedience. She goes to the edge of the cistern prison-tomb. She looks down into it:

"How black it is down there!

It must be terrible to be in so black a hole!"

With at least a show of compassion, she bids the soldiers bring up the prophet. Pity is mingled with curiosity:

"Bring out the prophet. I would look on him."

The soldiers fear to disobey Herod's strict commands. Salome then turns to her Syrian lover, Narraboth, the young captain of the guard. She appeals to him to favor

her. She must look upon this wonderful man about whom all are talking, and whom the Tetrarch so deeply fears! She bribes her young admirer. If he will do what she desires, she will, tomorrow, from her litter, look at him through her muslin veils — perhaps she will even smile at him! Ah, she knows that he will do what she asks!

Her lover succumbing to her allurements and to her stronger will, orders the prophet up from the prison.

Scene 3

When Salome sees the sombre, august figure of the prophet, she shrinks back. The orchestra thunders the *Jokanaan motif*.

The prophet steps forward and utters fearful denunciations against the wicked Tetrarch and Herodias:

"Where is he whose cup of crime is full?

Bid him come forth, that he may hear the voice of him who hath cried in the desert and in the houses of kings!

Where is *she* who gave herself up unto the lust of her eyes, and sent ambassadors into the land of the Chaldeans?"

Salome. "He means my mother! Yes, it is my mother that he means."

Jokanaan. "Go, bid her rise up from the bed of her abominations, from the bed of her incest, that she may hear the words of him who prepareth the way of the Lord, that she may repent of her iniquities!"

Salome. "Ah! but he is terrible, he is terrible! It is his eyes above all that are terrible. They are like the black caverns where dragons live, the black caverns of Egypt in which the dragons make their lairs."

The young Syrian tries to hasten the princess away, but she persists:

"How wasted he is! He is like a thin ivory statue. He is like an image of silver.

I am sure he is chaste, as the moon is.

His flesh must be very cold, cold as ivory.

I would look closer at him!"

This is Salome's next step. She has been emboldened by his voice, and moves toward the prophet to examine him more closely. Her curiosity offends him:

"Who is this woman who is looking at me?"

Wherefore doth she look at me, with her golden eyes? Bid her begone!"

The princess gathers courage. She is gradually brazened. It is a great stroke of art. She steps forward and presents herself:

"I am Salome, daughter of Herodias, Princess of Judea."

Jokanaan. "Back! Daughter of Babylon! Thy mother hath filled the earth with the wine of her iniquities!"

Salome. "Speak again, Jokanaan. Thy voice is music to mine ear."

By a strange psychic law, her passion is inflamed by his curses. Her infatuation thrives on his anathemas.

Jokanaan. "Daughter of Sodom, come not near me! Cover thy face with a veil, and scatter ashes upon thy head, and get thee to the desert and seek out the Son of Man!"

Salome. "Who is the Son of Man? Is he as beautiful as thou art, Jokanaan?"

The princess is now at the mental stage where she knows no fear, even though the severe ascetic announces the Angel of Death, beating his wings. This sombre prophet has become the single object of her shameless love-passion. Love has cast out fear. She interjects between his repulses her descriptions of his body, his hair and finally his lips. She clothes her ideas in all the florid dress of Oriental imagery.

Oscar Wilde was either steeped in Oriental symbolism, or else drew upon sources which are so steeped. There is not a line put into the lips of Salome that surpasses in amativeness the sentiments of the Hebrew poet of the "Song of Songs." Note the parallel in a few of the lines.

The Hebrew poet lets Solomon say to the Shulamite:

"Thine eyes are as doves behind thy veil."

"Thy hair is as a flock of goats, that lie along the side of Gilead."

"Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet and thy mouth is comely."

Wilde's Salome says to Jokanaan:

"Thy body is like the snows that lie on the mountains of Judea."

"Thy hair is like * * * the clusters of black grapes that hang from the vine trees of Edom."

"Thy mouth is like a band of scarlet on a tower of ivory."

In the "Song of Songs" the heroine says:

"Let him kiss me with the kisses of the lips."

Salome says:

"I will kiss thy mouth, Jokanaan, I will kiss thy mouth."

"The Song of Songs says:

"Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it."

Salome says:

"Neither the floods nor the great waters can quench my passion."

The high point of the opera is reached when Salome's passion turns to *will*, and her will sets itself up in direct antagonism to the will of the relentless man of the desert. She says:

"There is nothing in the world so red as thy mouth. Suffer me to kiss thy mouth."

Jokanaan. "Never! Daughter of Babylon! Daughter of Sodom! Never!"

Salome. "I *will* kiss thy mouth, Jokanaan, I *will* kiss thy mouth."

The very abandon and horror of the scene so unnerves the young Syrian lover, that he slays himself and falls heavily upon the pavement.

Jokanaan interprets the suicide as the beating of the wings of the Death Angel he had foretold. He tries to frighten the girl, but she persists in her infatuation. He bids her, for the remission of her sins, go to the Man

of Galilee. He bans her, curses her, but she stands to her purpose:

"I will kiss thy mouth, Jokanaan."

The more violently he execrates her, the more vehement is her resolve. She wills to kiss his lips living or dead.

With a final curse the prophet descends to his dungeon, and Salome throws herself upon the lid of the cistern.

Scene 4

Herod, Herodias, the court, and guests now appear upon the terrace.

The king's brain is over-excited. He reads strange symbols in the moon. He slips on the blood spilt by the fallen young Syrian. It is an evil omen.

The Tetrarch's soul is haunted with weird portents. He thinks he *hears*, in the air, again and again, something that is "like the beating of vast wings."

He sees the face of the daughter of Herodias, pale and haggard from her interview with the Baptizer. He offers her some wine sent him from Caesar; but she says:

"I am not thirsty."

Herodias, the mother, rejoices that her rude, pleasure-loving spouse is thus rebuffed by her daughter, with whom he tries to coquette. He dashes down the cup, and tries to tempt Salome with fruit, but

"I am not hungry, Tetrarch,"

she responds, and he hurls the fruit away in dismay.

He will have her sit next to him, but, she says:

"I am not tired."

Herodias reminds him that she and her daughter are of royal race, while his father was a camel driver, a thief, and a robber.

They hear again a great prophetic arraignment of the queen, echoing anew from the cistern. Herodias begs the king to deliver this hated man up to the Jews.

The Jews beg from him the same indulgence, though they are thrown into the same interminable dispute as to who John is, and are as divided upon his personality as they are upon the Prophet of Nazareth, whom some declare to be performing miracles by the Sea of Galilee.

Herodias is weary of the endless discussions of the Jews over these men. She will get rid of this troubler. But the king holds Jokanaan to be a holy man. A deeply rooted superstition forbids him to lay his hand on the ascetic.

Mingling and interchanging with their counsels are the prophet's ever-increasing, vehement denunciations of the abominations of Herodias. His censures are ever issuing from the cistern.

"Dance for me, Salome!"

begs the Tetrarch, over whose volatile heart there has stolen a passing sadness, which he would dispel.

At first she will not; but when, as her fee, he promises to give her whatever she may ask, to the half of his kingdom, a dark thought invades her brain. She may thus attain her *will* with the prophet-prisoner.

Herodias does not wish her daughter to dance for the lustful monarch, but Salome eagerly asks:

"Will you indeed give me whatsoever I shall ask of you, Tetrarch?"

The intoxicated libertine vows, by his oath, to give her even to the half of his kingdom. He indulges the old hope that the beautiful princess may become his queen! Yet he is warned again by the beating of wings, as of a sombre bird. The beat of its wings is terrible,

in his *brain*. The flowers in his royal garland burn like fire. He tears the crown from his forehead. His distorted vision sees blood spots on the cloth; but what matter! He is now happy! She will dance before him! Nought but the dance of Herodias' daughter will appease his delirium, dispel his terrors. In spite of the terrific voice of Jokanaan from the dungeon, in spite of the protests of Herodias, with bared feet Salome dances before Herod.

Immediately the vigorous music played by the orchestra is hushed. Its impetuous rhythm is changed to a sweetly lulling melody, and Salome performs the Dance of the Seven Veils.

This Dance of the Seven Veils is founded on an ancient Assyrian, religious poem, which describes the descent of Istar, the Venus of the Assyrian myth, into the underworld. As she passes through the seven portals into the after life, a veil is dispensed with at each gate. The soul must pass naked into the Invisible.*

In this dance, in our crude, literal, western world, the *supposed* removal of veil after veil from the physical form creates, on the one hand, a disgust, and on the other makes a certain appeal to the voluptuously inclined.

Salome, in her passionate swirl, pauses a moment in ecstasy on the rim of Jokanaan's cistern-dungeon, and then prostrates herself at Herod's feet.

The Tetrarch's rapture over Salome's dance is equaled only by his horror at the fee which the princess now demands:

*Symphonic variations delineating in music this story of *Istar* were written by the French composer, *Vincent d'Indy*, in 1896.

"I would that they presently bring me, on a silver charger, the head of Jokanaan."

Wilde, departing from the earlier versions of the drama, has made Salome make this request of her own free will and impulse, and not by the suggestion of her mother.

Herodias rejoices over the doom of one who had so fearlessly prophesied against her abominations.

Herod endeavors to swerve the maiden from her daring purpose. But it is in vain. All his rich offers of costly emeralds, of five-score of white peacocks, of jewels, pearls, topazes and the like, are, to her, as nothing. She has *one desire* and passion.

Herodias takes from the hand of the despairing monarch the ring of death, the trinket which authorizes the beheading of John. She passes it to the executioner. It is his authority for John's death, and he descends into the dungeon. The music with a terrible realism describes the act of execution.

Salome is in a rhapsodic passion. She leans over the cistern's rim and listens until the black arm of the executioner reaches up the head upon a silver shield.

The wild maid seizes it with a glut of joy.

In Sudermann's drama this part of the scene is not disclosed. It is simply *said* that the princess kisses the dead lips. But from our analysis one sees that the central theme and climax of the Wilde-Strauss play turns upon Salome's savage resolve to have, even in death, the kiss which had been so poignantly denied her in life.

It may at first seem to us a ghoulish caprice, simply a wanton resolve to have her will. But the long, grown-up address which she makes to the lifeless head shows that her act was the result of a fatal infatuation:

"Jokanaan, thou wert the man I loved alone among men. All other men were hateful to me. But thou wert beautiful.
**** And the mystery of love is greater than the mystery of death."

Here, again, this drama echoes a sentiment familiar to every reader of the Hebrew "Song of Songs," which says:

"Love is stronger than death;
Jealousy is cruel as the grave.
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
The very flame of Jahwe.
Many waters cannot quench love
Neither can the floods drown it."

Salome says:

"Neither the floods nor the great waters can quench my passion."

We are certainly here among the primitive emotions. I know not whether any line in dramatic literature has struck a deeper chord in the tragedy of the world-pain than the last words of Salome, when she rises to the consciousness that the attainment of her desire has been at the price of blood:

"There was a bitter taste on thy lips. Was it the taste of blood?
**** Nay, but perchance it was the taste of love. **** They say that love hath a bitter taste. But what matter, what matter? I have kissed thy mouth!"

The only possible issue of the drama follows: Herod, turning and seeing Salome, says to his guard:

"Kill that woman!"

and the princess of Judea is crushed beneath the shields of the soldiers.

CURTAIN.

This music-drama records the catastrophe wrought by the love-passion in its most rudimental, cataclysmal form.

Everything in the Salome music-drama we may see here in our human world.

We look upon a Hebrew princess, like Salome, grasping the trunkless head of a Jokanaan, and kissing it in the ecstasy of the love-passion; or we see, in drama, a Judith, holding up the head of a Holofernes, gloating in triumph over a fallen foe. We call it barbaric. We shrink from the spectacle with repulsion.

But we have only to wait until, in our latest civilization, there comes a social crisis, or a mine explosion, or a war, or a sudden death in a home—and there reveals itself to us the savage which still lurks in our nature, the higher beast in the human at his best.

In our outer life we cover ourselves with a thin veil of culture, and feign to be shocked when art dares to show us, on the one hand, the possible grace in the human form; or, on the other, the very brute, with all its terrible possibilities of passion, which lies, usually concealed, within our human life.

We are trained to life, but not to art, and hence an art-work like Salome, true to original life, to primitive emotions, often shocks our senses, and the cry in the past has been—suppress it.

But just as we sincerely face nature and life—and art, which is their symbol—we shall bring the best to realization.

When men have taken the Salome out of art, out of its connection, and exhibited it separately in its thousands of forms, they have exalted the sensual and entirely forgotten its symbolism.

When our culture clears itself, we shall be free, and able, with soul profit, to look upon any of the symbolisms of life.

A COURSE OF LESSONS IN GRAND OPERA
By NATHANIEL I. RUBINKAM, Ph. D.

Salome

Town.....State.....Percentage.....

(OVER)

6. Which of our great poets can be quoted in defense of Life's Darker Side, as a subject for art?.....
7. Name the four chief characters of the play..
.....
8. What one character has a strange fascination for Salome?
.....
9. What psychic law is illustrated in Scene 2?.....
.....
.....
10. How is it further illustrated in Scene 3?.....
.....
.....
11. What is the name of the Oriental dance which Salome performed?.....
.....
12. What does she demand of Herod as a reward?.....
.....
13. What have you to say for or against "Salome" as an opera?
.....
.....
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.....
.....
.....

Siegel-Myers
Correspondence School of Music
Chicago, Illinois

A Course of Lessons *in the Study of*
Grand Opera

By Nathaniel I. Rubinkam, *Ph. D.*



"I am a very old man, and yet I have never been able to understand myself; how then can I judge others?" —
Arkel. "Pelleas and Melisande," Act I, Scene III.

Lesson No. 6
Maeterlinck's Drama and Debussy's Opera
"Pelleas and Melisande"
in One Lesson

Maeterlinck



If anyone were to ask me what writer of the present age, all of whose works it would be well to ponder, I should say, Maurice Maeterlinck.

Now in middle life, he has been, since youth, a poet, a story-writer, an essayist, a naturalist, a dramatist, and in it all—a philosopher; for Maeterlinck has ever tried to have his literary work reflect his vision of human life.

He is by descent and birth a Belgian, born in the city of Ghent in Flanders, in 1864. As William Sharp says of him, he is “racially, as well as mentally and spiritually, a Fleming of the Flemings. He has all the physical endurance, the rough bodily type of his countrymen; but he has also their quiet intensity of feeling, their sense of mystery.”

He was educated at a Jesuit school and at the University of Ghent. At twenty-four years of age we find him at Paris in the Latin Quarter, seeking his literary fortune.

All of Maeterlinck's earlier work was of the weird, fantastic, dreamy type. He has often been likened to our Edgar Allen Poe. His work partook of his intense tendency to symbolize. But even so, when at twenty-eight years of age, he wrote the drama entitled, “The Princess Maleine,” the prominent French critic, Octave Mirbeau, made the oft quoted statement:

“I know nothing of Maeterlinck. I do not know where he is, or what he is. Whether he is old or young, rich or poor, I know not. I know only that * * * he has produced a masterpiece. He has given us the most

brilliant work of this period, the most extraordinary and the most naïve, also; comparable, and—dare I say it?—superior in beauty to what is most beautiful in Shakespeare.” This extravagant statement is the origin of the designation of Maeterlinck as the “Belgian Shakespeare.”

You would probably not agree with Mirbeau, as to any writings of the earlier period of Maeterlinck. The poet said of himself:

“My soul dwells in the shadows.”

His early work is full of dark symbolism, melancholy fatalism, showing a strange, sombre sense of the mystery of life.

Mr. Alvan E. Sanborn says of this stage of Maeterlinck’s career:

“With an art whose very silences were potent, Maeterlinck’s dramas symbolized those vague and terrible aspects of the sub-conscious existence, which have usually been considered impossible of expression. They were dreams of doubt, of restlessness, of gloom, of moral terror, of despair; nightmares, only the more horrible for their ineffable beauty of form; poetic presentations (rhythmic without rhyme) of the mystery of life and the inexorable-ness of destiny.

“Their scenes were laid in crumbling castles, full of secret passages, forgotten dungeons, and subterranean pools, and surrounded by black, sunless forests, or bramble-grown, weed-choked gardens, strewn with broken and prostrate statues.

“Their characters were half-mad, half-phantom kings, queens, princes and princesses, dominated by irresistible passions which made them puppets of fate.”

You will recognize the truth of this characterization in the following typical specimen of Maeterlinck's mystical plays, "*Pelleas and Melisande*," which he produced at thirty years of age.

There came a time when, in Paris, the poet emerged from the mists and darkness out into the philosophy of optimism. The evangelist of this new gospel is said to have been Georgette Leblanc, the brilliant woman who stole his heart and whom he luckily married. She has been called his good "genius." This talented actress has been a favorite singer in the operas "*Thais*," "*Sapho*," and "*Carmen*," as well as an interpreter of the songs of Schubert, Brahms and Debussy.

The Maeterlincks live, during the winter, in the Maritime Alps region, to the southwest of Nice, amid the roses, aloes, oranges and grapes. A portion of their time is spent in their picturesque Paris home, in Passey, the garden of which overlooks the Seine. Their summers are spent in Normandy, where they occupy the ancient Abbey of Wandrville, which was abandoned by the Benedictine monks in 1901. Parts of this structure and ruins date back to the eleventh century.

Maeterlinck's drama, "*Pelleas and Melisande*," does not transport us to any one country. It does not surround us with any geographical environment. We are in "No-Man's land." It is called *Allemonde*. If this word were a mixture of German and French, it would mean—all the world—every man's land. And this is the scene of Maeterlinck's play, for, reading it or seeing it, one has a vague sense of universal experience.

Debussy's Music Drama



DEBUSSY'S setting of the play does not, like the Wagnerian music-drama, attempt to express each character and action by a distinct "motif." Debussy's music is simply the drama's background. The artist spent nine years in brooding upon this play. He makes its music, in a marvelous way, express its characters and scenes; the changeful moods of its men and women as they move in the sombre forest; its gloomy castle by the deep fountains; its subterranean vaults; its death odors; its mysterious sea-grotto. It voices the soul-silences, the blindness of its people who have very little will, but who wander and act more like the victims of a determining fate.

Debussy says: "I tried with all my strength and all my sincerity to identify my music with the poetical essence of the drama."

This poetical essence, these shades of mood, have made the music-drama very difficult for orchestras to master; and it is almost impossible to get pianists to attempt it. Debussy has tried to blend, in his music, the two emotions—the musical emotion and the emotion of the character—to make us feel them both at the same time.

The Opera and the Drama

If you wish to understand the meaning of the play, not so much its moods as its philosophy, you must turn for a moment away from Debussy's music-drama to Maeterlinck's play. The music-drama omits two important scenes, from my viewpoint. It omits the first scene of Act I, and the first scene of Act V.

Pelleas and Melisande

A Music Drama in Five Acts

By

MAURICE MAETERLINCK

Music by

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

English Translation by Henry Crofton Chapman.

CHARACTERS

Pelleas }
Golaud } Grandsons of Arkel

Arkel, King of Allemonde

Yniold, Son of Golaud

A Physician

Melisande, An unknown Princess from an unknown land

Genevieve, Mother of Pelleas and Golaud

Serving women

SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY

- Act I. Scene 1. A Forest
Scene 2. A Room in the Castle
Scene 3. Before the Castle
- Act II. Scene 1. A Fountain in the Park
Scene 2. A Room in the Castle
Scene 3. Before a Grotto
- Act III. Scene 1. One of the Towers of the Castle
Scene 2. The Vaults of the Castle
Scene 3. A Terrace at the Entrance of the Vaults
Scene 4. Before the Castle
- Act IV. Scene 1. A Room in the Castle
Scene 2. A Room in the Castle
Scene 3. A Well in the Park
Scene 4. A Well in the Park
- Act. V. A Chamber in the Castle

Note on pronunciation: Pelleas—Pel'-lē-as; Golaud—Go-lawd'
Arkel—Ar'-kel; Melisande—Mě-lee-sänd'; Genevieve—Je'-ne-veev
Yniold—Nee'-öld

The music-drama has twelve scenes in the four acts, and when produced in Paris each scene was given with an elaborate and artistically painted scene as a background. As produced in Chicago during the first season of the Chicago Grand Opera Company, Mary Garden sang the role of Melisande.



Act I

The opera opens with the second scene of the drama.

SCENE 2. This scene shows us an immense primeval forest in the distance. This wood is far away from the castle—"east of the sun, and west of the moon." In this forest Golaud, the elder son of Arkel, a mighty hunter, is lost, while following up the traces of a wild boar, which he has shot.

Beside a spring in the forest, he discovers a young girl, weeping. He coughs, but cannot attract her attention. He approaches and touches her on the shoulder. She is startled, trembles and tries to run away. She does not want him to touch her—she is afraid.

He is struck with her beauty. She is a charming young girl, just merging into womanhood. She has run away, far away, far from her native land.

A crown-piece which some one gave her has fallen into the water, while she was weeping, but she will not allow Golaud to restore it.

He tells her who he is. She notices that his hair is gray at the temples—that his beard also is gray. To her he appears a giant.

He, too, is lost, he tells her. Finally he persuades her to let him lead her out of the forest.

Her name is Melisande. Is she a princess? She is dressed like a royal personage, though her clothes are all torn by the briars.

SCENE 3. The next scene is a great hall in the old castle of King Arkel, overlooking the sea. The venerable king and his daughter, Genevieve, are discussing a letter which Pelleas has received from his step-brother, Golaud.

In the letter the absent hunter describes his strange finding of Melisande. Six months ago they were wedded. His mother, he knows, will gladly forgive him. He wonders how his grandfather will regard this marriage, for it will disarrange some of his political plans. Even Melisande's beauty may not excuse it.

Golaud and Melisande are to sail past, over the sea, in sight of the castle. If they see a light in the top of the tower, all will be well; if not, they will sail on, no more to return!

The decision of the aged king, with its complete resignation to fate, is the highest wisdom, from the viewpoint of Maeterlinck, at the time of writing this play. He believed that we are not masters of our fate, but are creatures of destiny. Arkel says:

"He has probably done for the best. I am an old man, and yet I have never been able to understand myself; how then can I judge others? * * * Unless we close our eyes, we are always deceived. * * * He is already past middle life, and like an impulsive boy he has married a young girl whom he found by a spring. It may seem strange to us because we see only the wrong side of others' fates—even the wrong side of

our own. * * * I thought the hand of the Princess, Ursula * * * would make him happy * * * and then that alliance would have terminated long wars and old animosities. He has not acceded to my wish. Let it be as he has chosen. I have never striven to contradict another's fate. * * * Never, perhaps, do useless events occur."

This was Maeterlinck's solution of life at that time. We are in the hands of fate, destiny.

And yet, in another instance, Arkel uses his utmost endeavor to prevent what he feels is a mistake, before it is made. Young Pelleas, weeping, begs leave to go on a very long journey to see a friend who has requested him to come and see him before he dies. The grandfather objects:

"Perhaps your friend is not so ill as he thinks. * * * We know not what your brother's return may bring forth. Besides, is not your father, here in the room above, worse perhaps than your friend? Can you hesitate between father and friend?"

SCENE 4. The next scene is just outside the castle. On the left we see the lofty battlements of the citadel. In the background is the wide sea. All about is the dense forest.

Genevieve and the newly arrived bride walk about the garden. Melisande feels its gloom. Forests! forests all about the place! This same gloom Genevieve had felt forty years ago when she had first come to Allemonde. The sun's light hardly penetrates even at noon. But yonder is the shining sea.

The youthful Pelleas enters from the side of the sea. He predicts a storm. He and Melisande are left alone, and together they watch the ship which brought her hither sail away.

Melisande. "It is the ship in which I came."

Pelleas. "Do you hear the sea? The wind is rising. Let us go down this way. Give me your hand."

Melisande. "Look, look; my hands are full."

Pelleas. "I will take your arm, for the path is steep and it is very dark. I may be going away tomorrow."

Melisande. "Oh! why are you going?"

Even at this, their first meeting, she is interested in him, and in his plans.

Act II

SCENE 1. This scene shows an ancient fountain in the park. At this time the castle walls rise to our right beyond a lake, and at our feet is a dense forest.

It is stifling noonday. Young Pelleas and his brother's youthful bride are sitting at the fountain. Melisande, in her mystery and witchery, has been compared with Fougue's Undine, with Rautendelein in Hauptmann's "Sunken Bell," with Miranda and Juliet in Shakespeare, and Stephen Phillips' Francesca.

This fountain was once considered miraculous. It was supposed to heal the blind. It is still called the "Fountain of the Blind," but since the king himself has become almost blind, people have lost their faith in its virtues.

It is a lonely place—so quiet that even the waters seem asleep. The water is ice cold and as deep as the sea itself.

Maeterlinck shows the power of this romantic environment over these two young people, casually thrown together.

Melisande leans down over the marble slab, and tries to plunge her feverish hands into the cold water. She cannot do this, but her hair, longer than her arms, falls into the flood.

It was also at a fountain, in a far away forest, that his elder brother found her. And now Melisande plays with the wedding ring she had received from Golaud. She throws it up toward the sky and it falls into the deep well and is lost. At the moment the ring falls into the water the bell of the castle tower strikes twelve.

She did not want the crown, lost in the first fountain. She does not want this bridal ring of Golaud. She asks:

"What shall we say, if Golaud asks where it is?"

Pelleas feels the mystery, the responsibility:

"The truth, the truth, the truth!"

he answers, as they go away.

SCENE 2. This scene reveals Golaud's sleeping apartment in the castle. The elderly hunter is lying wounded upon the bed. Melisande is watching by his side.

In the older mysticism, in the conception of the world as being controlled by Destiny, people looked for coincidences—happenings which bind together two events. So the suffering Golaud relates that while he was hunting in the forest—and just at the stroke of noon—his horse swerved, and suddenly grew wild and dashed blindly and madly against a tree. It was at that very moment, Melisande recalled, that she had lost his ring. She tries to comfort him. The aging man of the wilds declares he is made of iron and blood. She need not worry about him.

But her soul is tortured with what has happened. She falls to weeping. He tries to probe her feelings. She is as elusive as a spirit. It is something stronger than herself that is weighing upon her. She feels that she can no longer endure the life she is compelled by fate to live.

Golaud tries to comfort her.

He knows that the castle is old and gloomy; that it is all very cold and very lonely; that all the country must seem melancholy to this child-woman. She can see the sky every day.

Then he grasps both her little hands:

"Oh, these little hands, that I could crush like two flowers! Ah! where is the ring I gave you?"

She does not tell him the truth. The ring had slipped from her finger, she says, while she was gathering shells for little Yniold down by the cave on the seashore. Then the roar of the waves * * *.

He sends her forth immediately to seek it. He would have lost everything in the world rather than this ring. She must seek it at once before the tide comes in. He will not allow her excuse, of darkness coming on, to interfere; she can ask Pelleas to go with her.

"Pelleas? Pelleas?"

she cries.

Some one has said: "Love is ever the fleeting victim, wantonly broken upon the wheel of fate." Such is shown to be Maeterlinck's thought in this drama. But in the later dramas, which mark his transition to a more hopeful philosophy, wisdom conquers fate and destiny.

SCENE 3. The next scene is that of an immense grotto, opening out toward the sea. A jutting promontory in the distance has on it a little weather-beaten shrubbery. The sky is overcast with threatening clouds.

Pelleas and Melisande are standing, in the black, starless night, at the entrance to the weird grotto. She has never gone into the cave. Pelleas portrays to her its dangers, its terrors, its beauties. "It is very deep and

very beautiful." Here are the hulks of old shipwrecks. "She must be able to describe the place where she lost the ring, if Golaud questions her."

They press on until a moonbeam pierces the darkness, and shows at some distance within, three old, white-haired beggars asleep, side by side, against a ledge of rocks.

What is meant by these sleeping beggars? They may be symbols of souls of the past, starved by the cruel regime of the fortress. Huneker suggests that "in certain pages of Maeterlinck it is well to let sleeping symbols lie undisturbed."

The moonbeam which falls on them heightens the gloom—and the hearts of the young lovers throb in unison. From this moment their fates are drawn together as one.

Act III

SCENE 2. In the next stage picture, Melisande is disclosed at the window of her room in the castle-tower. It is a lovely summer night. She is combing her hair and thinking of Pelleas. She sings:

"My long, long locks unplaited,
Unto the ground they fall;
My locks for you have waited,
As long as the height of the wall."

The young prince issues upon the lawn from a winding staircase. He spies her and asks:

"What are you doing there singing at the casement window like a beautiful bird?"

This scene of Melisande and Pelleas at the castle-tower is one of the supreme pictures in world literature. The painter's art has often tried to portray its beauty.

"Do not stay so far back, Melisande. Lean over a little that I may see your hair unbound. * * * Oh! Melisande! oh! how beautiful you are thus."

She leans toward him as far as she can. He tries to take her hand—this one night before he goes away. She makes him promise before she reaches to him her hand, that he will not go away.

She sees a rose in the shadow down there in the garden—in those deep, green shadows. And, as she leans out, her hair falls forward suddenly and envelopes the prince.

He is entranced.

"See, see, though you are so far above me, it reaches to my heart—it reaches to my knees. And it is sweet, sweet as though it fell from heaven. I cannot see the sky through the flood of hair. * * * My two hands cannot hold it all; it is caught in the willow branches. * * * You are my prisoner tonight. * * * I tie your locks, I tie them to the branches. * * *"

Two doves belonging to Melisande fly out from the tower, and circle about them in the night. As Melisande seeks to escape, and begs Pelleas to leave her, footsteps are heard. It is Golaud. He still regards their evident intimacy as childish sport, however, and says:

"You are two children. Melisande, do not lean that way from the window, you will fall. Know you not it is late? It is nearly midnight. Do not play thus in the dark. You are two children." He says with a nervous laugh, "What children! What children!"

SCENE 3. But Golaud has a premonition of catastrophe, and wishes to impress upon his younger brother, a fear of impending disaster. He leads Pelleas down into the subterranean vault of the castle.

There is a smell of death. Pelleas almost slips into a deep gulf. A stench like the odor of a tomb rises from the edge of an overhanging rock. Golaud points out great fissures in the wall, and cracks in the pillars

which sustain the castle arches. The fortress itself is in imminent danger.

Pelleas looks straight down into the abyss, as though he desired to see the bottom of it.

If our interpretation is true, the drama is a vision of the past, of the horrors which victims once suffered; and the stench, the odor, is the fate, the destiny of the present generation.

Pelleas is then allowed to ascend to the fresh air.

SCENE 4. Here follows an impressive scene between the two brothers upon a walled terrace, outside the vaults. Golaud is seated pensively on a stone bench and Pelleas is looking out over the balustrade. Genevieve and Melisande are sitting at an open window in the tower.

It is near noon. The younger brother delights in the glory of the fresh air. They had been an hour and a half in the vaults, the damp and heavy atmosphere of which had been like a leaden dew or a poisoned slime.

Now it is good to be breathing again, the pure air from the open sea.

Golaud is still impressed by the scene at the tower window. He says to himself:

"I understand quite well that it was only child's play, but it must not be repeated. Melisande is very young and very impressionable, and it is necessary to be more than usually careful, as she is with child, we think. She is very delicate; still a mere girl, and the least yielding to emotion might be serious."

Pursuing the subject, Golaud shows his deep suspicion, saying to Pelleas,

"Avoid her as much as possible."

SCENE 5. Golaud's mistrust, which has deepened, leads him to act as a spy on the movements of the young people. He tries to bribe his little Yniold to unfold what he knows of the habits of the "little mother" and Pelleas.

He endeavors to discover the subject of their conversation—what they say and what they do.

But the child is so artless, so evasive, so tender and innocent, that he proves an unsatisfactory tell-tale; and his jealous father exclaims:

"Ah! misery of my life! I am here like a blind man who seeks his treasure at the bottom of the ocean!"

As a *motive* of the play—blindness is one of the curses of the present generation, for the guilt of the past.

They are in front of the castle, and he lifts the child up to Melisande's window, now just lighted. Yniold sees their "little mother" and Pelleas, too, but has little or nothing to report, and cries to be let down, as though he, too, were hurt by Fate.

Act IV

SCENE 1. The next scene is called the "Anger of Golaud." It takes place in a room in the castle. The distracted Melisande has heard that Pelleas is about to go away on a journey. The venerable Arkel has pressed his aged lips to her forehead and cheek. He sees her just as a bit of beauty by the side of death.

But Golaud's suspicion has grown to jealousy, and jealousy has given way to wrath. He enters, and seizing the girl by the hair, forces her violently to her knees. She is saved only by the interposition of his aged sire.

Golaud then leaves her in despair. She says to Arkel:

"He loves me no more. I am not happy."

The aged patriarch exclaims:

"If I were God, how infinitely I would pity the hearts of men."

SCENE 4. Now follows the most intense scene of the entire play. It is the fatal meeting of Pelleas and Melisande in the park, by the Fountain of the Blind.

The two young lovers have been thrown together by fate until the flames of love have been thoroughly enkindled.

Of course, Golaud had married Melisande, but it had been only a convention. He had brought her home to the castle, had, himself, enjoyed his hunting expeditions, and left his bride to the entertainment of his younger brother, who was fitted to her by age, by temperament and by affinity.

Pelleas says:

"I have been playing like a child, with what I did not suspect. Playing close to the snares of fate."

Here by the Fountain of the Blind he hears, for the first time, that she loves him.

Pelleas. "You love me. * * * Since when, Melisande?"

Melisande. "Always, always, since I saw you first."

This declaration sets in flame his entire being. They see Golaud coming, and rush to their last embrace.

Pelleas is felled by the sword of his enraged brother and dies by the Fountain of the Blind.

Melisande flees in terror to the forest and is pursued by Golaud, with drawn sword.

Act V

The first scene of the last act, like the first scene of the first act of the drama, is played among the servants of the castle. Both of these scenes, as I have said, are omitted in the Debussy Opera, but they seem, to me, to contain the key to the main motive of the play.

We saw, in the first scene, the maids trying in vain to wash the sill, the door and the steps of the old castle. We have learned, in the play, of the deep subterranean vaults, with the stench of death in them, of the fissures and cracks in the walls, which portend ruin.

And in the first scene of the last act, the servants speak with bated breath of Golaud and Melisande being found, lying, both wounded, at the door of the castle—and there was blood upon the sill, upon the sill they had tried to clean. And they knew a babe had been born to her three days ago.

To the servants, everything seems to be wrapped in secrecy and mystery.

It seems that Maeterlinck is working out in this drama the old idea of the Greek dramas, that a blood-guilt rests on the old castle, and cannot be removed without retribution.

It is the ancient conception of the inexorableness of fate.

We are then ushered into Melisande's chamber, in the palace, where she has lain some days at the point of death. Golaud, overcome with remorse, cries:

"I killed her for no cause! * * * A murder for which the stones might cry out! They were kissing each other like innocent children. * * * And in a moment—I did it in spite of myself; don't you see! I did it in spite of myself."

Later, after asking the aged Arkel and the physician to retire, he tries to force from her a confession.

"The truth must be spoken by one about to die. * * * Do you swear to tell me the truth? * * * Did you love Pelleas?"
Melisande. "Yes, of course I loved him. Where is he?"

Golaud. "Do you not misunderstand me? * * * I ask you if you loved him with a guilty love—if you—if you were both guilty?"

Melisande. "No, no; we were not guilty! Why do you ask me that?"

He is still dissatisfied, and even after Arkel and the physician return, the jealous man tries to press his inquiry. But the kindly monarch holds him back. He begs:

"Do not disturb her. Do not speak to her. You know not the mysteries of the spirit."

When Golaud tries again to force a confession of guilt, Arkel says:

"Do you hear me? She must not be troubled. Speak lower now. The human soul is silent, it must tread its path by itself. It passes and suffers and shrinks alone."

The last scene shows all the house servants kneeling in the background, indicating that she is dead. The physician approaches the bed and says they are right—Melisande has passed away. The aged king has the last word:

"She was a poor, helpless little child, a mystery, as every human being is. * * * It is all beyond my comprehension. * * * Come, the infant must not stay in the chamber of death. It must live and take her place—poor little babe!"



Siegel-Myers Correspondence School of Music
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

A COURSE OF LESSONS IN GRAND OPERA

By **NATHANIEL I. RUBINKAM, Ph. D.**

Examination Paper for Lesson No. 6

Pelleas and Melisande

Name { Class Letter and No.
Account No.

Town State Percentage

Write name, address and numbers plainly. Fill in "Account No." only when it appears on your Lesson Ticket.

1. What is the scope of Maeterlinck's literary work?.....

2. What is his nationality?

3. What country and what language did he adopt?.....

4. What play brought him first into prominence?.....

5. What transition of thought did he undergo?.....

6. Who was chiefly influential in his change of mood?.....

7. What stage in his career is represented by Pelleas and Melisande?

8. Who interpreted Pelleas and Melisande musically?

9. Give the characteristics of the music in the Opera.

10. What omissions from the Drama hinder the understanding of the play as an Opera?

11. Name the chief actors in the Opera.

12. What is the most intense scene according to your reading?

13. What is your impression of the Opera?

Siegel-Myers
Correspondence School of Music
Chicago, Illinois

A Course of Lessons *in the Study of*
Grand Opera

By Nathaniel I. Rubinkam, *Ph. D.*



"Bohemia is bounded on the north by hope, work and gaiety;
on the south by necessity and courage; on the west and east
by calumny and the hospital."—*Henry Murger.*

Lesson No. 7
The Opera, LA BOHEME, by Giacomo Puccini
in One Lesson

La Boheme



THE scene of La Boheme is laid in the French Capital. We will spend an hour in the Latin Quarter and get a glimpse of the famed Bohemians of Paris.

Bohemia long since ceased to mean for us the little country in middle Europe. It now signifies any place in the world—and especially in the great world-cities—where artists, students and literary people lead a somewhat careless and irregular life; a community where the responsibilities of citizenship rest lightly, and whose members have little regard for the usual social conventions.

The first world-city to lay claim to a great Bohemia was Paris; but other metropolises have followed close—London, with its Chelsea, where Carlyle was a neighbor; its Soho, with its book-stores, barrel-organs and restaurants; its Bloomsbury, Fleetstreet and Hampstead, with their students and art-devotees.

Arthur Ransome has written a large book on "Bohemia in London." He reminds us that the members of the so-called Bohemian Clubs—"The Savage Club," "The Vagabonds," etc.—are not genuine Bohemians. Their pretenses are unreal because "they are respectable citizens, dine comfortably, sleep in feather-beds, and find hot water waiting for them in the mornings." The real Bohemians are people who have nothing waiting for them in the morning—nothing but their rent-bills and kindred liabilities.

The Bohemians run generally in cliques, in bands welded together by their professions, love of art for art's sake, and unconventionality. They have no certified incomes. They carve out the destiny of each day after the

day awakes. If the day shakes a small fortune into their laps, they take care that it does not last over night, for it is one of their tenets, not to earn more than they spend. Everything is exhausted in the interest of art, idealism, enjoyment, joyousness.

We have our Bohemian quarters and groups in New York and Chicago, but our present theme is the Bohemian life in Paris.

The French capital has presented to the world the most genuine types of Bohemians. Its earliest type in the modern world was the poet, François Villon, of the 15th century.

Civilization has advanced even in the types of Bohemians. Today, I think there could scarcely be shown a young man whose life is devoted to art, who has the wildness, the total abandon, and disregard for all social custom, that is recorded of the poet, Villon—the Bohemian of Paris—five hundred years ago.

The nineteenth century type of a Parisian Bohemian was Henry Murger—a poet, a dramatist, a man of vision, of broad human sympathies, of highest aspirations. He lived and died a Bohemian of the Bohemians.

The world's praises, as usual, came too late. The year he died he received the cross of the Legion of Honor. But he was practically a pauper when his life went out.

Immediately after, when it was impossible to gladden his heart with some token of appreciation, a subscription was opened to erect a handsome monument to his memory. Upon this generous deed, Henry Curwen, who has written the story of Murger's literary struggles, gives a forceful comment in New Testament phraseology,

"Long ago he asked for bread; now they have given him a stone of the costliest."

It is upon Henry Murger's book, entitled "Scenes in Bohemian Life," that Puccini's Opera, "La Boheme," is founded.

It is an attractive theme. Leoncavallo, Puccini's contemporary Italian composer, in the same year, 1896-7, wrote also his masterpiece on the identical topic, and from the same book.

Thus, Murger—the pauper poet—is today reaping his immortality—his very words and ideas making undying music in the world.

Murger knew what he was writing when he created his scenes of Bohemian life. Marcel, the painter, one of Murger's characters, gives us the psychico-geographical boundaries of Bohemia:

"It is bounded on the north by hope, work and gaiety; on the south by necessity and courage; on the west and east by calumny and the hospital."

A real Bohemian must be a genuine lover of art for art's sake, a devotee of literature, of beauty, through painting, through music, through philosophy.

In the second place, he must have no visible means of subsistence, other than what his art will earn. Otherwise he is no Bohemian. He must be willing to pay the price of hunger, cold, neglect—even death itself—if demanded.

He may live above the laws and conventions of society, and, we are told, one out of every hundred, who enters Bohemia, comes through, earns and achieves immortality.

The Music of La Boheme

Puccini's opera, *La Boheme*, has in it very little dramatic development. It simply depicts in music, some scenes of Bohemian life in Paris, as Murger has described them.

It is a series of music pictures. It throws the lights and shadows, as music would express them, across the lives of four artists, who are candidates for a career of intellect and beauty.

Murger says these four young men were wont to style themselves "great." Rudolph was a great poet, Gustave Colline was a great philosopher; Marcel, a great painter; and Schaunard, a great musician.

These four inhabit a fifth story attic—the fifth because there is no sixth. They are inseparable cronies, always go together, sit together and are called the "Four Musketeers."

Bohemia would be a desolate place except for that wonderful faculty, the imagination. Through mental suggestion it creates worlds of its own. Thus Hannele, in Hauptmann's drama, throws celestial radiance about her bed, in a miserable Silesian almshouse.

The music of *La Boheme* begins with what we might call the Bohemian *motif*—a prelude to the life of art, of chance, of joyousness, freedom from care, death.



La Boheme

The opera of La Boheme is founded upon characters and scenes in Henry Murger's "La Vie de Boheme," a book upon the Bohemian life of Paris.

Italian Text by

Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica.

Music by

GIACOMO PUCCINI.

ENGLISH VERSION.

Acts I. and II. by William Grist.

Acts III. and IV. by Percy Pinkerton.

Characters in the Play:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Rudolph (a poet)..... | Tenor |
| Schaunard (a musician)..... | Baritone |
| Benoit (a landlord)..... | Bass |
| Mimi | Soprano |
| Parpignol | Tenor |
| Marcel (a painter)..... | Baritone |
| Colline (a philosopher)..... | Bass |
| Alcindoro (a councilor of state)..... | Bass |
| Musetta | Soprano |
| Custom-House Sergeant | Bass |

Students, Workgirls, Citizens, Shopkeepers, Street Venders, Waiters, Boys, Girls, Etc.

Place, Paris.

Time, About 1830.

Act I

When the curtain rises, you see two of these young men in their attic-studio in the Bohemian Quarter of Paris. It is Christmas eve—a cold, December afternoon.

NOTES ON PRONUNCIATION—Giacomo Puccini, Jä-ko'mo Pu-chi'nee; Benoit, Ben-wä'; Mimi, Mee'mee; Parpignol, Par'pin-yol; Marcel, Mar'sel; Colline, Kol'leen; Alcindoro, Al-sin-dō'rō. Boheme—French, Bohème=Bo-hām'; François Villon (p 3), Fran-swah' Vi'yong.

The room is very bare. There is an old stove, or fireplace, with no fire in it. There are the usual necessary pieces of furniture, two candlesticks, and a pack of cards scattered about the room.

Rudolph, the poet, stands with his hands in his pockets, pensively gazing out of the window, through which one sees an expanse of snow-clad roofs.

Marcel, the painter, is sitting in front of his easel, before an unfinished picture which he is painting, entitled, "The Passage of the Red Sea." He is rubbing and blowing his fingers, which are numb with cold.

They are both struck with the grim humor of their poverty. Marcel, as he tries to paint, says:

"This Red Sea passage feels as damp and chill to me
As if adown my back a stream were flowing."

Stepping a little back from his easel, he exclaims:

"But in revenge, a Pharaoh will I drown,
And you,"

looking at the poet.

Then pointing to the stove:

"Into the grey skies watch I the smoke of thousands
of Paris chimneys rise."

"My thought then wanders down to that old and lazy stove,
that nothing pays,
But like some noble swell, in ease lives all his days."

The fellows are frost bitten, frozen, and in danger of starvation. Marcel is about to break up a chair, with which to build a fire—but Rudolph, the poet, suggests that their genius might flash into flame:

Marcel—"What, burn up the 'Red Sea?'"

Rudolph—"No; too great a smell would it stir up."

Rudolph then takes up a bulky manuscript of a drama he has written. But in terror, Marcel exclaims:

"Intend you to read it? 'Twill chill us."

No; he means to burn it. He tears out the first act, strikes fire with a flint, and they are soon sitting comfortably in front of the fire's warm blaze.

Colline, the philosopher, comes in, and throws down a bundle of books, which he could not pawn on the street because it is Christmas eve. The three gather around the blazing fire of the burning manuscript, and give way to facetious jocularity:

"How deep the thought is!"
says Colline.

"Color, how true!"
says Marcel.

"In that blue sky my drama is dying,
"Smoke from a love scene, ardent and new,"
exclaims Rudolph.

Then, throwing the rest of the manuscript in the fire, he cries:

"Three acts at once I desire to hear."
Colline—"Only the daring can dream such visions,"
and in chorus, they say:

"Dreams that in bright flames soon disappear."

Then in comes the artist, Schaunard, the musician, the fourth member of the inseparable quartette. There are with him two grocer's boys, carrying in food, wine, cigars—and a bundle of wood.

It is a windfall to Bohemia. The three companions about the flickering embers, rush to enjoy their good fortune. Schaunard tries to tell the story of how he has gotten the bounties. But the three hungry fellows are more interested in getting the food and wine on the table and the fuel on the fire.

Schaunard has another surprise, which will insure them a banquet. He scatters a lot of coin on the floor.

It looks as though the Bank of France had burst the contents of its coffers into their attic. And they are not tin medals but real coin—the superscription of the new King, Louis Phillipe, shines on their face!

The period is 1830, just after the July Revolution, and the election of the new king. It is precisely the time of Rostand's "L'Aiglon" (The Eaglet). Just now, off in Austria, the young son of Napoleon—the Eaglet—is chafing at his detention in his grandfather's imperial family; longing for the restoration of the Bonaparte glory, and the greatness of his illustrious father, impatient to gallop his horse—not in the narrow confines of the Schoenbrunn Valley, but over all Europe.

What vicissitudes has human fortune! Not to speak of L'Aiglon's sombre death-scene, which child of France, think you, had, in his individual soul, the true secret of happiness: the prince, consumed to death with an insatiable and unquenchable hunger and thirst for unattainable world-power, or these four jolly devotees of art in Paris, no one of whom for two consecutive hours could allow an unspent coin to rest in his pocket?

Schaunard, the musician, will not permit his comrades to eat the food. This will keep. They have now a little money, and they will not dine at home on Christmas eve

"While the Latin Quarter embellishes
Its ways with dainty food and tempting relishes.
Meanwhile the smell of savory fritters
The old street fills with fragrant odor.
There, singing joyously, merry maidens hover."

The trio respond:

"'Tis the gladsome Christmas eve!"

But Schaunard replies:

"Having for echo each a student-lover,
A little of religion, comrades, I pray;
Within doors drink we,
But we dine away."

This is genuine Bohemianism.

They are about to divide the coin for their Christmas eve lark, when a knock is heard at the door. It is the landlord, come for the quarter's rent!

The Musketeers greet the visitor with well dissembled joy, giving him a seat at the table. They offer him some Bordeaux. They drink to his health—then another tippie—and another, until he becomes a little mellow; but between each drink he continues to remind them that he has come for the quarter's rent.

"Glad to hear it,"
says Marcel.

"Another glass!"
urges Schaunard. Then they get him to relate a little love-escapade he has had; and yet, he declares, he has a wife.

"A wife! A wife!"
exclaim the quartette, quite shocked.

"Foul shame!"
cry Schaunard and Colline in unison, and Rudolph adds:
"His vile pollution empisons our honest abode!"
Schaunard and Colline would drive him out, and Marcel avows:

"With perfume we must fumigate!
Hence!"

The four cronies lay their shoulders to the fellow, and, in spite of his protests, eject him from the door, wishing his 'landlordship' a pleasant Christmas eve!

Another picture of Bohemian life! Their law is pitted against his, and they are four to one.

Rudolph, the poet, must finish an article for a magazine, and cannot, for five minutes, accompany his companions to the Café Momus, in the Latin Quarter, which they always frequent together.

The three (Marcel, Schaunard and Colline), a little the worse for their wine, tumble out and down the stairs, agreeing to wait for their mate at the porter's lodge below.

This gives the opportunity for the attractive introduction of Mimi, the first of the two heroines of the play. In contrast with the rough ejection of the landlord, and the loud departure of the comrades, is the tender, almost silent, entrance of the little neighbor-maid, Mimi.

Rudolph has settled himself down to his short task for which he does not feel in the vein, when he hears a timid knock. He finds at his door, a shy, shrinking, young girl.

Her candle has gone out. She asks modestly for a light. He bids her enter. She is seized with a fit of coughing. Her face pales to an ashen hue. She swoons. He sustains and helps her to a chair by the fireplace. He offers her a little wine:

"This wine will impart warmth, and revive your wasted strength."

Rudolph is strongly attracted to the girl. He lights her candle. But as she departs, she misses her door key. She turns back:

"Oh! how stupid! how stupid!
The key of my poor chamber,
Where can I have left it?"

And her light is again blown out! In the dark they search the floor on hands and knees for the key. Rudolph finds it, but disguises the fact until he touches her groping hand—which he holds with deep feeling:

"How frozen are your fingers!
Let me warm them into life.
'Tis useless hunting, while murky darkness lingers.

But by good fortune to-night
Will the moon be bright,
And by its kind light
The search we will renew.
Meanwhile, to you, fair maiden

In a few words will I tell true
Who I am, what I do,
And how I live. Shall I?"

Mimi is silent. He sings to her his story:

"I am, I am, I am a poet!
What am I doing? Writing.
What do I live on? I live
In poverty, I gaily
Extract from wealth and fashion,
Love-themes and odes of passion.
My host of dreams and fancies,
And castles in the air,
Make me in soul a millionaire."

That's the Bohemian—in soul, a millionaire.

"But often from my storehouse
Stolen is part of my booty.
When you appear, believe me,
Then are my fair dreams banished,
Gone my dreams, and my fancies
Quickly away are vanished,
The theft yet does not grieve me,
For since to replace all my dreaming
Sweet hope is o'er me beaming.
Now that I've told my story,
You must in turn speak,
And who you are apprise me;
Say, will you tell?"

And she answers:

"Yes, Mimi I'm always called;
But my name is Lucia.
My story is a short one:
On cloth or silk, at home or out,
I embroider.
I am quiet and happy,
The rose and lily divert my leisure;
These flowers give me pleasure,
So enchanting they!
They speak to me of love;
They speak of springtime;
They speak of dreams,
And noble thoughts that fire me,
And the charms of poetry that inspire me;
Understand you?"

And Rudolph answers:

"Yes!"

Mimi is the favorite role of Geraldine Farrar.

Murger says, in his book:

"Mimi was a charming girl, especially likely to appeal to Rudolph, the poet and dreamer. She was twenty-two and slight and graceful. Her face reminded one of a sketch of a high born beauty; its features had a marvelous refinement. The hot, impetuous blood of youth coursed through her veins, giving a rosy hue to her clear complexion that had the white velvety bloom of a camellia. This frail beauty allured Rudolph. But what served most to enchant him were Mimi's tiny hands, that, despite her household duties, she contrived to keep whiter even than those of the Goddess of Ease."

Murger notes that one woman's hands become coarse, grimy, unattractive, while another woman, who has just as much work to do, contrives, like Mimi, to keep them white and beautiful.

The three friends of Rudolph are now calling to him impatiently from below. They complain that he is keeping them too long. From the window, he bids them go on to the cafe—he will follow.

Then in a beautiful love duet, we see Mimi and Rudolph following on toward the Café Momus. She skips along joyously happy in her new love, in spite of her threatening cough.

Act II

Anyone who has ever been in the French capital at the time of its great carnivals, can readily appreciate the scene with which the second act or picture opens—the festival of Christmas Eve.

I was once in Paris on the 14th of July (which corresponds to our Fourth), when the entire city was out of doors. In the evening, no vehicle was allowed on the streets as the entire space was devoted to an "All-Fool's" merriment by the people.

The French know how to celebrate a holiday—as well as do the Germans.

Here we see Rudolph and Mimi edging their way through the square, on one side of which stands the famous Café Momus.

Street venders are selling every species of toys and sweetmeats, flowers, vegetables and fruits. The city is in the wildest commotion and uproar.

Soldiers, students, maids, gendarmes, work girls, are swirling in the motley crowd about the shop doors.

So great is the mass inside the Café Momus that, in spite of the cold evening, many are seated outside on the pavement underneath the huge lantern which lights the place.

"Hold tightly to my arm, love!" says Rudolph, as they wedge their way into a shop to fit Mimi out with a new bonnet.

"Do you think this rose-trimmed bonnet suits me?" asks Mimi naïvely, as they again surge through the maddening masses; and Rudolph answers:

"The color becomes your dark complexion."

In front of the Café Momus, where the three friends are ordering supper, Rudolph introduces to them his newly found fiancé:

"This is Mimi,
The merry flower girl;
And now she's come to join us,
Our party is completed—
For I shall play the poet,

While she's the Muse incarnate,
Forth from my brain flow songs of passion,
As at her touch the pretty buds blow,
As in the soul, awaketh beautiful love!"

While a street vender, Parpignol, in high tenor is crying his wares around them, and mothers and children are freely purchasing from him flowers, drums, guns and whips, the friends are giving their orders for a feast.

Here is your true Bohemia. It illustrates Murger's conception of the Bohemians:

"When want presses them, abstemious as anchorites; but if a little fortune falls into their hands, see them ride forth on the most ruinous fancies, loving the fairest and youngest, drinking the oldest and best wines, * * *; then, the last coin dead and buried—they begin again to dine at the table d'hôte of chance where their cover is always laid."

It is at this moment that Mademoiselle Musetta enters. Murger says of her:

"A pretty girl of twenty, very coquettish, rather ambitious to shine, without any pretensions to intellect and possessing as a natural instinct, a positive genius for elegance."

Here in Bohemia on Christmas Eve she is wonderfully clad. Musetta is one of those daring young women of the wealthier classes, who like to create a sensation among shopkeepers, and to patronize quarters not supposed to be congenial to their fastidious tastes.

She has as an escort, a pompous, fussy, overdressed old gentleman, Alcindoro de Mitonneaux. When she sees the party at the restaurant-table, she exclaims:

"Oh, those delightful suppers in the Latin Quarter!

From time to time, I feel the need of breathing the atmosphere of such a life as this.

My madcap existence is like a song; each of my love episodes forms a verse of it; but Marcel is the refrain."

In fact she is an old sweetheart of Marcel, the artist.

She now induces her escort, Alcindoro, to take a table near the quartette, and then endeavors to attract their attention.

At first Marcel describes her to his friends as a coquette, who changes lover for lover without number, but when she sings again her song:

"As through the street I wander onward merrily," his old affection revives, and she perceives her re-conquest.

She then gets rid of her escort, Alcindoro, by sending him with her shoe to exchange it at the bootshop, on the pretense that it pains her foot, and soon all the past is buried in a re-enchantment between Marcel and Musetta. This also, is a phase of Bohemian life.

Now a great patrol of soldiers, policemen, students, citizens, street-arabs, is on the stroll.

At the close of their banquet, the quartette, together with Mimi and Musetta, move away with the throng, while Musetta, because her shoe is missing, is carried by Marcel and Colline.

When Alcindoro returns with the shoe, the waiter presents him with the entire bill which Musetta and the company have left for him to pay. He has lost his love and found a bill. This, too, is a phase of Bohemian life; and should you ever stroll into a Bohemian quarter, be wiser than was the senile Alcindoro.

Act III

Away down at the extreme south end of Paris, is a toll-gate, through which the people pass in and out of the city. I once went through one of these gates of the city-boundary, and was interested, on returning, to see the word Paris above the gate. I was again suddenly in Paris! This toll-gate is called in the play, "Barriere D'Enfer"—the boundary of hell!

Puccini sets the third act of his opera at this gate because Murger describes the loves between these young Bohemians, without bread, as a véritable "hell on earth." Many loves are such, where life is a struggle with poverty and want.

There is an old tavern to the left, with a small open space in front of the toll-gate. In this tavern are living temporarily, Marcel, Musetta, and Rudolph. The once fashionable girl is now giving music lessons, for board, and Marcel, the artist, has his picture of the "Passage of the Red Sea" out on the front of the building, which is now marked: "At the Port of Marseilles;" that is, through this gate is the way to Marseilles. He has other figures, such as a Turk, and a Zouave, on the fresco. He paints for his board at the tavern.

It is now very early in the morning, on a murky, February day. One hears the bell of the St. Therese Hospice. And through the trees of the open square, appears Mimi, seeking Rudolph. A racking cough is shaking her fragile frame.

Murger here depicts the changefulness of these Bohemian loves, and Puccini wonderfully translates into music their jealousies, their caprices, and their moods.

Here the romantic entanglements between Rudolph and Mimi are severed—partly because of the girl's death-pre-saging cough. But their farewell duet is a song of the spring time, and the glorious sun.

On the other hand, the vigorous painter, Marcel, and the mirthful, extravagant Musetta, separate in a different mood, in a storm of invective, fury and rage.

Bohemian life is gay, but terrible!

Act IV

The final picture is again in the old attic, the same one shown in the first act. The four comrades are living here to all appearances in the utmost misery and poverty. The act is a musical rendering of Murger's lines:

"For sometime past, the friends had led lonely lives."

Marcel had not met Musetta for three or four months, and Rudolph had not heard of Mimi, except when he was alone and imagined her presence. Then the very significant lines in the Murger story:

"One day, as Marcel furtively kissed a bunch of ribbons that Musetta had left behind, he saw Rudolph hiding away a bonnet—that same pink bonnet—which Mimi had forgotten."

"Good,"

muttered Marcel,

"He's as craven hearted as I am."

A gay life, but a terrible one!

Rudolph, sitting in their lone, desolate room, is trying to write; and Marcel, to paint. Each falls to musing on his past loves. Rudolph exclaims:

"Ah! Mimi! those brief, glad, golden days!"

and Marcel:

"Ah, frivolous Musetta; thee can I ne'er forget."

By the help of their vivid imagination and humor, the quartette dine on salmon, venison, mushrooms and champagne, transformed out of bread, herring and water.

A professor of psychology will give you a learned lecture on mental suggestion, and you feel you have learned a great deal. But here you see four men creating with their imaginations, joyousness and a banquet of finest viands and champagne—out of bread, herring, and water.

Then the quartette arrange a dance to give expression to their pent-up emotions. While in the midst of the burlesque dance, Musetta appears in great agitation. She announces that Mimi is down upon the stairway, too weak to climb the steps.

The coquette had found the little grisette, dying; and Mimi had begged to be brought back to the attic room, where she had first met Rudolph.

The final scene of Mimi's death in the attic illustrates the theme that with the Bohemians, love, once kindled, if true, is eternal in the breast. And the scene shows that here among impoverished artists, you will always find the most genuine altruism: the earnings of Musetta, and the one coat of Colline, a garment antique and rusty, gladly go for medicine and comfort for the sufferer.

You see the unaffected sorrow of the entire group; and the sincere grief of the artist and dreamer, Rudolph, you hear in the plaintive cry from his prostrate form:

"Mimi, Mimi."

CURTAIN.

Siegel-Myers Correspondence School of Music
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

A COURSE OF LESSONS IN GRAND OPERA

By NATHANIEL I. RUBINKAM, Ph. D.

Examination Paper for Lesson No. 7

La Bohème

Name { Class Letter and No.
Account No.

Town..... State..... Percentage.....

Write name, address and numbers plainly. Fill in "Account No." only when it appears on your Lesson Ticket.

1. Where is the scene of the Opera laid?.....

2. Describe a Bohemian

3. Give a type of a Bohemian in Paris of the 15th and one of the 19th century.....

4. On what book is the Opera, "La Boheme," founded?.....

5. Characterize the music

(OVER)

6. Give the names of the four Bohemians who lived in the garret room and the occupation of each?

.....
.....
.....
.....

7. What two girls figure in the Opera?.....

.....

8. Describe Mimi.....

.....

9. What type of girl is Musette?.....

.....

10. Where is each of the four acts played?

.....
.....
.....

11. What characteristic of Bohemian life is illustrated in the final scene?.....

.....

12. Give your impression of the play.....

.....
.....

Siegel-Myers
Correspondence School of Music
Chicago, Illinois

A Course of Lessons in the Study of
Grand Opera

By Nathaniel I. Rubinkam, Ph. D.



"Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous proofs of holy writ."
—Iago

Lesson No. 8
The Music Drama **OTHELLO** by Verdi
in One Lesson

Desdemona and Othello



AN OLD Italian story book containing one hundred legendary tales,* gives an account of a very brave Moor of Venice, who was held in the highest esteem by the dignitaries of the Venetian Republic.

He had great aptness and ability, and was renowned in war, from which he always received the highest reward. This Moor captivated the heart of a beautiful Venetian girl, Desdemona, daughter of a Senator.

She was attracted to him by the brilliancy of his public service, by the witchery of his valor, and by his fame in foreign parts. Desdemona and the Moor, after an ardent courtship, were married, against the wishes of her relatives. But they lived in happiness and mutual affection so long as they remained in Venice.

After a time, however, the Moor was transferred to the far distant Island of Cyprus, lying in the farthest eastern corner of the Mediterranean sea, south of Asia Minor.

The Turks were threatening to dispossess the Venetian Republic of this Isle of Cyprus, and the Moor was looked upon as the only Venetian sufficiently brave and hardy to hold and defend its garrison.

His devoted wife, Desdemona, determined to accompany her husband on his long and venturesome voyage. This established the charming woman still more deeply in his affections.

This story in its original Italian form has in it but one name—Desdemona. When Shakespeare used the story for his great tragedy of *Othello*, he obtained the other names from other sources.

*Hecatommithi of Geraldî Cinthio, 1584.

In the Italian tale the human interest centers around Desdemona, the Venetian girl, whose love for a hero of another race, color, and temperament, is the cause of her tragic end.

Shakespeare sets Othello at the head of his tragedy. For some reason the Prince of Poets never lets a woman's name stand alone as the title role of any of his plays. He could have said Othello and Desdemona, as he said "Romeo and Juliet," or "Antony and Cleopatra." But he employs simply the name Othello.

The name of the heroine, in the old Italian story, is Disdemona, which the English poet changed into the more euphonious Desdemona. Dis-demonia means, demon-bound, one enchained, hypnotized, be-witched by a demon. It is possible that the old tale roots back into a myth, where a human being, a woman, is bound, charmed by a demon, as a bird is charmed by a serpent.

It is humanized by the old Italian story-teller, by making the charmer a man, a hero, an honored warrior, yet of a strange race and color, and her misstep is commented on as pointing a moral. Shakespeare still more humanizes the idea, by centering the interest in Othello.

There remain in Othello the strange, demonic qualities, and the same power over Desdemona. The love between them does not spring up from a spontaneous, mutual affinity. She is bewitched by his personality, entranced by the eloquence of his stories of adventure.

"She loved him for the dangers he had passed,
And he loved her that she did pity them."

According to Othello, this was his only witchcraft. But what more do we want? Not a supernatural magic, but a vital and spiritual magnetism! They are married in secret. There is the certain charm of fatality hovering over the whole tragedy. It would be well, first, to refresh one's mind with Shakespeare's Othello, as a preparation for Verdi's Opera.

Verdi's Music Drama

Verdi is one of the most illustrious names in the music of the Italian School. His *Othello* was among the latest and most perfect of his creations. He was born the same year as Richard Wagner (1813), and was a close student of the work of the German master. He wrote the music of *Othello* in his 73rd year (1886).

The man who wrote the Italian text, Arrigo Boito, gave it long years of deep, conscientious study. Boito was a poet, a literary man, a musical genius. He himself composed a number of operas, notably "*Mefistofeles*."

Our English translator of the Italian text, Francis Heuffer, is a man of Shakespeare's country, thoroughly acquainted with the Shakespearean vocabulary and filled with the spirit of the Bard of Avon. Hence, there have been able collaborators on the story through its six steps to the opera as we have it in English: these steps are

1. The Ancient Myth.
2. The Old Italian Story.
3. The Shakespearean Tragedy.
4. Boito's Italian Text.
5. Verdi's Music Drama.
6. The English Translation of the Text used by Verdi.

An opera text dares cover only a portion of the material for the drama, and the words of the poem must correspond with and be adapted to a musical rhythm. A genius like Wagner, who thought his words and his music at the same moment, is free from the limitations which affect the two artists, the one who writes the poem, and the one who composes the music. Boito wrote the text; Verdi the music.

Othello

CHARACTERS IN THE OPERA:

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Othello, a Moor, General in the Venetian Army..... | Tenor |
| Iago, his Ensign, or Standard Bearer..... | Baritone |
| Cassio, his Lieutenant..... | Tenor |
| Roderigo, a Venetian gentleman..... | Tenor |
| Lodovico, Ambassador of the Venetian Republic..... | Bass |
| Montano, predecessor of Othello as Governor of Cyprus.. | Bass |
| A Herald | Bass |
| Desdemona, wife of Othello..... | Soprano |
| Emilia, wife of Iago..... | Mezzo-Soprano |
| Soldiers and sailors of the Republic. | |
| Venetian ladies and gentlemen. | |
| Cypriot men, women and children. | |
| Greek, Dalmatian and Albanian soldiers. | |
| An Inn-keeper, four attendants, people. | |

Place of Action—A seaport in Cyprus.

Time of Action—The end of the 15th century.

Act 1

Scene 1

Verdi's Othello begins with the scene of Shakespeare's second act—the arrival of the hero and heroine at the Island of Cyprus after a victory over the Turks.

It is an evening scene, outside the Cyprian Castle. On one side of the scene is a tavern. On the other side, an arbor. In the background one sees a quay and, beyond, the tempestuous waters of the Mediterranean Sea.

NOTES ON PRONUNCIATION—Othello (ō-thě'l'lo), Iago (ē-ä'gō), Cassio (kāsh'ī-ō), Roderigo (rō-dā-rē'go), Lodovico (lō-dō-vě'cō), Montano (mōn-tā'no), Desdemona (děz-dē-mō'nā), Emilia (ē-mil'ī-ä).

A heavy storm is raging. Lightning! Thunder! The chorus sings:

"Ho! a ship.

Othello's ship is laboring with the gale."

On the shore, stand Iago, Othello's standard bearer; Cassio, his lieutenant; Roderigo, a Venetian gentleman; Montano, Governor of Cyprus, and a great crowd of Cyprians, awaiting the arrival of Othello. The orchestra portrays the tempest. The chorus cries:

"She is lost in the sea and the night,
But the lightning reveals her to sight."

As Othello lands and approaches the crowd, followed by sailors and soldiers, the chorus shouts:

"Welcome! welcome!"

When the brave Captain reaches the assembled multitude, he reports his victory.

"Glad tidings hear; our wars are done. The ocean has whelmed the Turk. Heaven be praised and ours the glory; those whom swords had left, the storm has scattered."

The people are wild with joy.

"Long live Othello! Victory! Victory!
Dispersed all, and broken,
Their galleys are buried
Deep under the sea.
Let howling of whirlwinds
And rushing of waters,
And rolling of thunders,
Their requiem be!"

The storm gradually subsides; we see the people lugging the baggage from the ship to the castle and bringing a pile of wood for a bonfire.

We now hear from *Iago*, the villain of the play. In depicting the human fiend, Iago, Shakespeare's genius rises supreme. There are three villains in Shakespeare: *Richard III*, *Edmund* (in *King Lear*), and *Iago*, but the greatest of these is *Iago*. He is the same in the music-drama of Othello.

The music of the orchestra groans with Iago's turpitude. He is the essence and symbol of all the world's evil. He conspires with fate to bring about and to precipitate the tragedy.

We hear him now promising Desdemona, Othello's wife, to Roderigo, a shallow Venetian gentleman who had loved her and aspired to win her :

"The fair Desdemona,
Whom in thy secret dreamings thou adorest,
Will soon be weary of the dark embraces
And of the swollen lips of yonder savage."

Iago promises to stand by him as his friend. Roderigo shall "enjoy and hold her" as his own..

Iago, though in semblance a friend of the Moor, hates him. He hates him, first, because Cassio is made his lieutenant, while he, Iago, is but his *ancient*, his color bearer. Cassio has usurped his place. The crowd, insensitive to these rancours in the heart of Iago, now sings around the bonfire :

"Flame brightly, burning, flickering fire,
That with its splendor lightens the night,
Glittering, roaring, still rising higher,
Filling the bosom with rays of light."

A group of soldiers, among them Iago, Roderigo and Cassio, gather at a drinking table around the dying embers of the bonfire. It is a scene of revelry. Iago's plot is to get Cassio drunk. He toasts the great Othello and his Desdemona. He draws Cassio on. He tries to stir up a quarrel between Roderigo and Cassio. He sings a drinking song :

"And let me the canakin clink!
A soldier's a man,
A life's but a span,
Why, then, let a soldier drink!"

Cassio and the soldiers break in with jovial responses. Cassio becomes drunk, out of his senses, quarrelsome. Then Iago whispers to Roderigo:

"He is as drunk as man can be. Now hie thee
To provoke him to combat; he is rash in choler
And he may strike thee, and some tumult follow.
Then shalt thou cry a mutiny, and disturb
The Moor, in the arms of his love."

Cassio and Roderigo have a terrible onset; a great riot in the streets ensues. Iago leads the mob and spreads a great tumult and cry. He has a bell rung in the fortress.

Scene 2

On the approach of Othello, who is roused from his slumbers by the disturbance, Iago pretends to be trying to quell the fighting and riot.

Othello:

"Put up your weapons!
Why, how now, ho! from whence ariseth this?
Are we turned Turks, and to ourselves do that
From which heaven's mercy saved us? Honest Iago,
Speak, who began this? On thy love I charge thee."

Iago answers as though he had been a casual observer. He makes the blame appear to be innocent Cassio's.

Othello:

"Look if sweet Desdemona,
My gentle love, be not raised.
Cassio, thou art no longer my lieutenant."

Iago's first victory is won, Cassio is deposed. Iago, the cause of the tumult, is raised into Othello's favor.

Scene 3

Othello and Desdemona are left alone.

Othello:

"The night is dark and silent,
All blatant clamours cease."

My bosom's angry passion
In this embrace is stilled to perfect peace.
May the winds blow 'till they have wakened death,
If after every tempest come such calms of love."

Desdemona:

"My noble warrior, what bitter sorrows,
What long-drawn sighs, what hopes deferred have guided
Us twain to these embraces.
Ah, it is sweet to whisper to each other:
Dost thou remember
When thou didst speak of some distressful stroke
Thy youth had suffered from thy boyish days?
To hear this did I seriously incline,
With greedy ear would I devour thy discourse."

Othello:

"Wherein I spake of sieges and battles,
Of hairbreadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach,
Of moving accidents by flood and field,
And of impending death."

Desdemona:

"I saw Othello's visage in my mind
And thus to him did consecrate my soul."

Othello:

"You loved me for the dangers I had passed,
And I loved you, that you did pity them."

As tho' prophetic of the fate before him, Othello says:

"Surround me in embraces; for I fear
My soul hath her content so absolute
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds an unknown fate."

As under the starlit sky the lovers, in close embrace,
walk toward the Castle, we hear, in the orchestra, Othello's *Love Motif* to the words:

"Un bacio, un bacio ancora."
(*"A kiss, still one kiss more."*)

Act II

The Second Act is played in a great Hall of the Castle, where a glass partition enables one to look through to a large garden terrace. Here in the arbor of the garden,

Desdemona is resting at noon, with Emilia, Iago's wife, for her companion.

Scene 1

Iago's devilish plot is to get Cassio to go to Desdemona, to plead with her, to intercede for him with the general, to restore him to the lieutenantancy which he lost because of the drinking brawl.

Then Iago will manage to have the Moor see, from a distance, the deposed lieutenant in intimate conversation with Othello's wife. His plan begins to succeed, as Cassio makes his way toward the arbor.

Scene 2

Iago:

"Go then! thy fate I can descry,
Thy demon drives thee onward,
And that demon am I;
Even as my own impels me
On whose command I wait,
Relentless fate."

Then in a monologue, Iago utters his demonic creed. Like Richard III, he blames his villainy on the fatal defect in his physical being.

"Cruel is he, the God who, in his image
Hath fashioned me, and whom in wrath I worship.
From some vile germ of nature, some paltry atom
I took mine issue;
Vile is my tissue,
For I am human.

"I feel the primal mud-flow of my breed.
This is my creed:
As firmly I believe, as e'er did woman
Who prays before the altar,
Of every ill, whether I think or do it,
'Tis fate that drives me to it.

"Thou honest man art but a wretched player,
Thy life is but a part,
A lie each word thou say'st, thy tear, thy kiss, thy prayer,
Are as false as thou art.

"Man's Fortune's fool, e'en from his earliest breath.
The germ of life is fashioned
To feed the worm of death.
Yea, after all this folly, all must die.
And then? And then there's 'Nothing,'
And heav'n an ancient lie."

Here Iago tells some half truths in the interest of his villainy, just as a lot of falsehood has been told in the cause of righteousness.

Iago is glad to see his plot succeeding, as Cassio and Desdemona courtesy and whisper to each other, in the distance.

Scene 3

As Othello arrives, Iago pretends to be talking to himself :

"I like not that."

Othello overhearing him and seeing its supposed cause, has his suspicions first awakened. He is surprised, and, in answer to his question Iago replies :

"And did you trust in Cassio?"

Othello. "He went between us oft, taking a tender message to my lady."

Iago. "Indeed?"

Othello. "Ay, indeed! Is he not honest?"

Iago. "Honest?"

* * * * *

Iago (in a whisper) :

"Beware,
My lord, of jealousy!
It is a green-eyed monster which doth mock
The meat it feeds on, and which with its poison
Changes our nature."

Othello:

"Oh, misery!
Think'st thou I'll make a life of jealousy?
I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;
And on the proof—Othello turns decrees;
Away at once with love or jealousy!"

Desdemona now comes into the garden from the bower. Sailors, women, children, meeting her, sing in chorus, accompanied by small musical instruments, offering her flowers, strewing them before her.

Chorus:

"Wheresoe'er thy glances shed
Brightness, hearts must meet thee.
Wheresoe'er thy footsteps tread,
Flowers spring forth to greet thee.

"Rose and lily bringing,
We approach thy shrine.
Old and young are singing,
And our songs are thine."

Desdemona kisses the children. Some of the women kiss the hem of her gown. She gives a purse to the sailors. She then comes into the hall and approaches Othello. She makes her plea that Cassio may be restored to his office.

Scene 4

This is called the "Intercession Scene," beginning with:

"I have been talking with a suitor here
Who has felt your displeasure."

Then follows the "Handkerchief Scene." Othello refuses Desdemona's request on the ground of an aching head. She attempts to bind his head with her handkerchief. He throws her handkerchief down. She attempts to pick it up. "Let it alone," he sings, roughly.

Then follows a double duet. The first one is between Desdemona and Othello. Her innocence is hurt by his displeasure, which she cannot understand. She sings:

"If ever 'gainst my will I have offended,
Dear husband, let me pray it,
The word of pardon say it.
I am thy child, thy servant,
Of thy least hint observant.

Thy silence speaks of sadness,
Thy face is turned from me.
See in mine eyes the token
Of vows of love unbroken.
Oh! let me cheer thy sadness.
Oh! let me comfort thee."

Othello (to himself) :

"Haply because I lack
Soft parts of conversation,
Or that I am declined
Into the vale of years;
Haply because my visage
Is dyed of deepest black,
Her life is lost, a byword
Am I, my heart is broken,
And in the dust is scattered
My golden dream of love."

The other duet is between Iago and Emilia, his wife, who has picked up Desdemona's handkerchief. Iago first begs it of her, then deftly snatches it from her hand. Iago has now the fateful handkerchief in his possession and Emilia sees the disaster lurking for the unhappy pair.

Scene 5

Othello, exhausted, throws himself into a chair :

"Desdemona false!"

* * * *

"The thought is monstrous!"

* * * *

"False to me! ha! to me!"

* * * *

"O monstrous, monstrous!"

Othello is primarily of the hot, Oriental, Moorish, noble blood with the highest sense of honor; in the ways of the social world, as simple as a child, and hence, his easy jealousy.

He was deeply, truly, in love with his wife. The more thoroughly you love, the more quickly your jealousy

will be stirred, especially if you are of suspicious mould and are moved more by passion than by reason.

Iago knew the nature with which he was playing. He says:

"Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous proofs of holy writ."

He determines to lose Desdemona's handkerchief in Cassio's house, so that in Cassio's hands it may be to the Captain further proof of Desdemona's infidelity.

The Moor, now frantic in his passion, writhes over his fate.

Othello:

"Oh, now forever
Farewell the tranquil mind, farewell content
And noble thoughts of war!
Farewell the plumed troop, th' impending battle,
The swiftly flying shaft, the neighing steed,
The pride, the pomp and circumstance of glorious war,
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing pipe,
Farewell! Othello's occupation gone!"

Then follows a duet between Othello and Iago. The Moor demands proof that his love is unfaithful. The fiend tells him that on sleeping with Cassio he found him dreaming of Desdemona, muttering in his sleep, in tearful and in passionate accents: "Sweet Desdemona!" And then to the agonized Moor he swears that he "had seen in Cassio's hands a handkerchief crocheted with strawberries. Was it his?"

"Yes, he had given it to Desdemona!"

Othello:

"O that the slave had forty thousand lives!
One is too weak and poor for my revenge.
Listen, Iago:
All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven,
Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell!
Look on me, it is gone!
Yield up, oh love, thy crown to tyrannous hate!
Oh, blood! blood! blood!"

He kneels :

"Witness, you marble heaven,
Witness, ye eternal lights above,
Ye elements that clip us round about!
Never shall cease my hatred, never ebb
My wrath, until this hand hath wrought my vengeance."

Act III

The Third Act is played in the Great Hall of the Castle. Here the great duet between Othello and Desdemona takes place.

Desdemona appears at the threshold, innocent and unsuspecting; she finds the Moor bowed down. To the *Handkerchief Theme* she says:

"How is it with you, my husband;
My heart's sole lord and master?"

Othello (takes her hand tightly) :

"Well, my good lady.
Give me your hand, as white as virgin snow,
Yet hot and moist; which argues
A frank and liberal heart.
And yet, within this hand there is a young
And melting devil, that commonly rebels.
'Tis a good hand, a frank one; it requires
Much fervent prayer and castigation."

Desdemona:

"It yet hath felt no age, nor known of sorrow.
It was the hand that gave away my heart. But
I must speak of Cassio."

Othello:

"I have a salt and sorry rheum offends me;
Lend me thy handkerchief."

Desdemona gives him her handkerchief, but it is not the right one.

Othello:

"Not this. Take heed on it.
Woe to thee shouldst thou lose it.
My mother had it
From an Egyptian, a mighty charmer.
A potent spell is hidden in its texture.
To lose it, or giv't away, were sure perdition."

He bids her go fetch it; and she will, but she will first press her intercession for Cassio's re-instatement.

Othello falls into a rage. He calls her—strumpet. He asks her if she is honest. She pleads with him.

Desdemona:

"God sees my heart, and know that
I am honest and your loyal wife."

He calls her again an impudent strumpet. He leads her to the door and pushes her from the hall.

Scene 3

He then returns and utters his soliloquy:

"Had it pleased heav'n to try me with affliction,
Had it rained sorrow and shame on my bare head,
And to the very lips in poverty steeped me,
Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes,
I could have borne it, though bitter it were, and shameful."

"A drop of patience I would still have found
In some place of my soul.
But there, where I have garnered up my heart,
Where either I must live or bear no life,
The fountain from the which my current runs,
Or else dries up, to be discarded thence!
Turn thy complexion there.
Patience, thou young and rose lipped Cherub!
Ay, there look *grim as hell!*"

Scene 4

Iago enters and bids him hide in a wing of the Colonnade; and, thus bestowed, Othello overhears what Cassio, who is entering, has to say.

Scene 5

Iago then brings in the deposed lieutenant and in a way which Othello cannot hear, banters him on Bianca, a lady love; and what Cassio says of Bianca, the listening

Moor interprets as said of Desdemona. Iago asks Cassio about a handkerchief. Cassio draws it from his doublet. Iago takes it and holds it so that the hidden Othello sees it. When the Moor breaks out:

"I know it, I know't.
Oh, monstrous, monstrous."

Iago sings, in his part of the trio, with Othello and Cassio:

"This is a spider's web
Where thy poor heart
Is caught and languishes."

Then is heard a fanfare of trumpets, announcing the arrival of an embassy.

Iago hastens Cassio away and advises Othello not to poison Desdemona, as the Moor proposes, but to strangle her in the bed he charges she has defiled.

Scene 7

The Senate of Venice, in an order, read by Othello, recalls the General to Venice. The City of Cyprus, the army, the ships and the fortress are, by the order, left in the hands of Othello's lieutenant, Cassio!

The order comes from Venice, where the confusion of the tragedy wrought by Iago is unknown. The ambassadors do not understand the situation.

Scene 8

Othello, still in his fierce role, seizes Desdemona furiously by the hand:

"To earth, on thy knees."

Desdemona falls, and utters her plea in an aria:

"Yea, prostrate here. I lie in the dust,
With anguish my heart is beating."

I feel the icy breath
Of ill, that argues death.
The light upon his brow,
His smile, his tender greeting!
His kiss, where are they now?

"Weep then for aye, I must.
The sun who from his cloudless sky
Illumes the earth with splendor,
No comfort can he tender,
My tears he cannot dry."

Then follows a great sextette, in which the following take part: Emilia, Iago's wife, mourning the misfortune of Desdemona; Roderigo; Cassio, astounded at the great change in his fortunes; the Ambassador (Ludovico); Othello; and Iago.

Iago plots to have Cassio slain by Roderigo.

The chorus, ladies, cavaliers, are all thrown together in confusion.

Othello curses Desdemona. Voices cry outside, "Victory to Othello!" "Hail Othello!" "Long live Othello!" "Hail the Lion of Venice!"

Othello, overcome, swoons. The infamous Iago cries over Othello's prostrate body:

"Behold here, the lion!"

Act IV

In the final act we see the tragic outcome of Iago's perfidy, which culminates in Desdemona's bedchamber.

Scene 1

The exhausted woman retires with a premonition of her fate. She bids her maid, Emilia, spread on her bed the same sheets that were there on her wedding night,

and begs that she be shrouded in them, should she die.

As she sits before her mirror, she sings

“THE WILLOW SONG,”

a song which a maid of her mother sang long ago, when the man she loved forsook her.

“The poor soul sat pining

Alone and lonely,

There on the lonely strand.

Sing willow, willow, willow!

Upon her bosom her head inclining,

Sing heigho, sing heigho!

Sing all! A green willow shall be my garland.”

When she has finished the song, she sends her maid away.

Scene 2

Then she kneels before her image of the Madonna, over which a burning lamp is suspended, and sings her *Ave Maria*. In the mind of the land of Italy, Desdemona is a devout Catholic and implores the Virgin to give aid to the oppressed and to the mighty. She prays silently and we hear only her last words as she rises:

“At the hour of our death—Amen.”

Scene 3

She lies down to sleep and is awakened only by the kiss of Othello, who steals into her room, and before he will kill her, kisses her three times. He is agitated to the depths of his soul. He asks her if she has prayed, if any crime unreconciled is upon her soul. He will not kill her soul.

She sees that he means to murder her, and she sings:

“Because I love you, you kill me!”

She denies his charge that she gave the handkerchief to Cassio. She loves not Cassio. She demands that Cassio be called. But he is mute forever, dead, Othello says: (which is not true, for in the quarrel, Cassio has killed Roderigo.)

"Down with thee, strumpet!"

She begs for her life, but it is too late. He stifles her! Emilia enters, to hear only from Desdemona's dying lips:

"I die here, guiltless."

Emilia rushes out and cries:

"Ho, help. The Moor has killed my mistress."

Emilia dares to call the Moor a vile assassin.

To Othello's hasty questioning, he learns that Iago, a villain, had been the unjust cause of all his jealousy and of the fearful catastrophe.

The great Moorish soldier falls upon the life he has destroyed.

"Oh, Desdemona, Desdemona dead."

He draws his dagger—

"This still remains"—

stabs himself and dies above her body. We hear again the Othello *Love Motif*,

"I kissed thee ere I killed thee. No way but this,
Killing myself. (A kiss, a kiss once more.
Ah! one more kiss.)

CURTAIN.

Siegel-Myers Correspondence School of Music
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

A COURSE OF LESSONS IN GRAND OPERA

By NATHANIEL I. RUBINKAM, Ph. D.

Examination Paper for Lesson No. 8

Othello

Name { Class Letter and No.
Account No.

Town State Percentage

Write name, address and numbers plainly. Fill in "Account No." only when
it appears on your Lesson Ticket.

1. Trace the steps of the Othello Opera from the old Italian Story

to Verdi's Masterpiece.

2. Who wrote the text of Verdi's Othello?

3. Where does the first scene open, with respect to that of the

Shakespearean Othello?

(OVER)

4. How many acts are there in Shakespeare's Drama and in Verdi's Opera, respectively ?.....

.....

.....

5. Characterize Iago.....

.....

.....

6. Describe the characteristics of Othello ?.....

.....

.....

7. Which man, in your mind, was the more guilty ?.....

.....

.....

8. What is the chief characteristic in the personality of Desdemona ?

.....

.....

9. What, to you, is the chief motive of the Opera ?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Siegel-Myers
Correspondence School of Music
Chicago, Illinois

A Course of Lessons *in the Study of*
Grand Opera

By Nathaniel I. Rubinkam, *Ph. D*



"Love Laughs at Locksmiths."

Lesson No. 9
The Opera **BARBER OF SEVILLE** by Rossini
in One Lesson

The Barber of Seville

Opera in Two Acts

Foreword



LIVER GOLDSMITH once said: "I love everything old—old friends, old manners, old books, old wine."

The word *old*, however, is a relative term. Tennyson sings:

"Better fifty years in Europe
Than a cycle in Cathay."

In America we think an event quite old if it happened in the eighteenth century. It is old to us, because we have grown more in America in a hundred years than the old world has grown in ages. So 1794 was a long time ago. In that year, "The Barber of Seville" was first given in New York. It was the first Italian Opera given in our new world.

Our gentle ancestors in New York, in Philadelphia, in Baltimore, in Charleston, were delighted with this musical comedy—"The Barber of Seville." I say, our *gentle* ancestors, because a large proportion of our American forefathers had a sternness and a religious scruple against art, the stage, and operatic music. A few, however, have always stood for these things.

"The Barber of Seville" was, in those days, popular everywhere in Europe. The version played in America was not Rossini's. It was a work on the same theme, composed by Paisiello, fourteen years before, for the grand opera at St. Petersburg. There were three or four Germans, also, who made operas on the famous "Barber."

But it was not until less than a hundred years ago that the real history of the music-drama in America begins. The history of grand opera in the United States commences Nov. 29, 1825. On that date Rossini's "Barber of Seville," his "merry work," as it has been called, was played in New York.

Four members of the family of Manuel Garcia—father, son, mother, and daughter, assumed respectively the four chief roles—the Count, Figaro, Bertha and Rosina.

The youngest, Signorina Garcia, who played Rosina, afterwards became the famous songstress, Malibran.

Everyone who loves the music-drama should first of all be acquainted with "The Barber of Seville." Besides its inherent musical value, it has an historical, literary significance.

Who is the Barber of Seville? What is his name? Figaro.

Figaro, the Barber of Seville, stands for a distinct idea. There are certain names in European fiction which stand for definite conceptions. They might have been originally attached to actual personalities. At first, one of these figures may appear in legend, then as the hero of a book—a romance, a drama, an opera—until finally a certain conception becomes fastened to his name. For example, Faust. He was first, Dr. Faustus, the magician and necromancer; then the hero of the Faust book, with its legends of his exploits; then the hero of the tragedy by Marlowe, of the drama of Goethe's Faust, and of the opera of Gounod.

Faust stands for the eternal, persistent inquirer after truth. The word suggests the perennial longing for satisfaction, knowledge.

The name Don Juan, in Spain, stands for an idea in mythical romance, in the drama, in music. It represents the type of refined libertinism. Don Juan is the hero of great playwrights, as in France, of Moliere and Corneille; in Italy, of Goldoni. In Germany, Mozart wrote his immortal music-drama, "Don Giovanni" (Don Juan). In English poesy, Don Juan became a theme of the noted romanticist, Lord Byron. As Faust stood for philosophic thought, Don Juan stood for romantic feeling.

So Figaro, the Barber of Seville, represents an idea. Figaro stands for wit, ingenuity, and genius for intrigue. Figaro is the Spanish counterpart of the great English fictional character—Falstaff—the unique creation of Shakespeare.

The first literary treatment of Figaro, is in the two comedies by Beaumarchais, the eighteenth century French dramatist (1732-1799). The first was called, "The Barber of Seville," the second, "The Marriage of Figaro." These were considered masterpieces of French comedy at the time. Beaumarchais, with his "Figaro," helped on the French Revolution.

The second of these two comedies was put into musical form by the great German, Mozart, who composed his "Marriage of Figaro" six years before Rossini was born (1786). This masterpiece by Mozart is still a favorite in the operatic world.

Rossini's greatest work, written in 1816, was also on the same witty barber. Rossini felt that his immortality rested more on "The Barber of Seville" than upon any and all of his other multitudinous creations. In his own words, he expected to survive him, the third act of his "Tell," the second act of his "Othello," but his Barber of Seville, from beginning to end.

The Barber of Seville! Seville! Ah! to-day we are in Spain! Our studies in the drama make us great tourists. To-day we are amid the fascinations of Andalusia, that wonderful country of Southern Spain, the garden and granary of the Iberian Peninsula.

Seville has well been called the Paris of Andalusia. It is a gay, commercial centre—a city of Carmens and cigarettes, the legendary home of Figaro and Don Juan, an arena for bull-fights, the city of a merry, careless life. The great weather-vane on its famous Giralda Tower is supposed to be an architectural joke. It is a colossal figure of Faith, so nicely balanced that it can easily be turned about by any wind that blows.

Here in Seville, even to the present day, you will be shown the traditional tonsorial shop of Figaro, the "Barber of Seville." In the play, the Barber designates its location to Count Almaviva:

"Fifteen my number is,
Shop on the left hand,
Mount up by four steps,
Door with a white hand,
Five splendid chignons
Hang in the window,
Jars of cosmetics
W'd bleach a Hindoo—
Waxen and stately,
A fair Circassian,
Gives my emporium
An air of fashion.
You can't mistake it,
I shall be there," etc.

When you go to hear "The Barber of Seville," you must be in a genial mood. You must have the feeling of the environment, or you will miss all of the enjoyment the opera possesses.

The reason "The Barber of Seville" has lived through the generations, is not only because of its music, but because of its character types. They are human, they are universal. They are as actual in our American life to-day as they were in old Seville.

The Music of "The Barber of Seville"

An enthusiastic personal friend of Rossini's exclaims: "And what a *chef d'oeuvre* the *Barbiere* is! Do you remember the explosions of gaiety, that Homeric laughter, the *piccolos* screaming, the clarionets roaring, the double-basses even chuckling, when the chorus in G enters—fireworks of fun, an avalanche of hilarity? You feel as if you were suddenly dipped in oxygen. You laugh with him, and are happy and merry with him; nearly intoxicated with the champagne of music,—that is Rossini! * * * The man who spoke in tones, laughed in notes, mocked in music, chaffed in syncopations, and who * * * did precisely what Wagner preached—he sang and orchestrated dramatic thought. That was Rossini!"

Again, the same writer* says:

"Rossini was a musician of the old school, a lover of melody. Once in taking a farewell of a musician friend (it proved to be his last) he said: 'Mind this, my boy, where there is no melody, there is no music; do not allow yourself to be dragged into those barbarous calculations which they call music, with no music in it. Write graceful and deeply felt thoughts, but write melody, or write nothing.'"

* Louis Engel in "Reminiscences of Half a Century, from Mozart to Mario."

The Barber of Seville

(1816)

Italian: Il Barbiere di Siviglia.

An Opera in Two Acts.

By Gioachino Antonio Rossini.

Italian text by Cesare Sterbini, upon a previous opera, "Il Barbiere di Siviglia" of an Italian composer, Giovanni Paisiello (1741-1816).

[*This opera was founded on a French comedy of the same name by Pierre Augustin Canon, a dramatic writer known to literature as Beaumarchais (1732-1799). Rossini's opera was first performed at Rome in 1816.*]

Cast of Characters.

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Figaro, the Barber | Baritone |
| Doctor Bartolo | Bass |
| The Count Almaviva, lover of Rosina, disguised as Lindor. | Tenor |
| Basilio, a Music Master | Bass |
| Ambrosius, Bartolo's servant | Bass |
| Fiorello, Almaviva's servant | Bass |
| Rosina, Dr. Bartolo's Ward | Contralto |
| Bertha, Dr. Bartolo's housemaid | Soprano |

Place, Seville, Spain.

Time, The Seventeenth Century.

Act I

Scene 1.—An open square in the old Spanish city—Doctor Bartolo's house stands on the left, with its inevitable balcony. It is night-time, toward break of day. Rosina, restless in the home of her old guardian,

NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION—Il Barbiere di Siviglia, ēēl Bār-bēē-ēr' dēē Sēē-vēēl'-ya; Goachino Rossini, Jā-kēē'-no Ros-sēē'-nī; Figaro, fē-gā-rō'; Bartolo, bār-tō'lō; Basilio, bā-sil'-i-ō; Ambrosius, ām-brō'-sī-ūs; Rosina, rō-sēē'-nā; Bertha, bēr'-thā; Seville, sē-vil'; Almaviva, āl-mā-vēē'-vā.

is expected to come out for a breath of the fresh, early air of dawn.

Count Almaviva, desperately enamored with the charming girl, prepares to give her a morning serenade, and for this purpose has engaged Fiorello and a little band of musicians. The serenaders steal out noiselessly into the street under the window. They quietly tune their instruments, as the Count bids them:

"Softly! softly! let no one speak."

It is an exquisite tableau.

Then the chorus plays the serenade, and the Count sings the now famous Cavatina, "Ecco ridente in cielo."

"Lo! smiling in the orient sky,
The beauteous dawn is breaking;
Say, canst thou thus inactive lie,
My love; art thou not waking!
Arise, dear idol of my heart!
My hope, my soul's devotion
Assuage the anguish of the dart,
That makes such wild commotion.
But hush! methinks I view that face,
And all my doubts are vanished;
Thine eyes diffuse soft pity's grace,
And all my fears are banished.
Oh, rapturous moment of delight!
All other blisses shaming;
My soul's content, so pure and bright,
On earth no equal claiming."

But the lady does not appear! They can catch no glimpse of her. They have sung and prayed in vain. Hope wanes as the dawn advances.

The Count gives a purse of money to Fiorello and the musicians, and bids them go. He has no more use for their songs and instruments. The men are profuse in their expressions of gratitude, but are so boisterous in their romping over the money, that there is danger of their arousing the whole neighborhood.

Fiorello withdraws and waits, while the Count lingers around where he is sure the maid has perceived him each morning. He realizes his ridiculous situation and shows it in the line:

"See to what a state love can reduce a man of my rank!"

Before and since the days of old Seville, Cupid with his weapons has driven men of every type into peculiar, farcical corners.

Scene 2.—The Barber of Seville comes on the stage. His name is Figaro, the hero of the opera, the hero of the great comedies of Beaumarchais, Paisiello, Rossini, and Mozart. As before intimated, the name Figaro has come to stand as the synonym for witticism, satire, shrewdness, and intrigue. Satirical and humorous journals have adopted the name, as *Le Figaro*, of Paris.

The Count recognizes Figaro, and withdraws under some arches to let the important fellow pass.

"The dawn begins to redden,
But love does not blush,"

Figaro sings glibly, lightly, his Cavatina, "*Largo al factotum*," in which we realize what a large sphere of activity and responsibility, and what self-importance belongs to the coiffeur under the old regime:

"Make room for the Factotum of the town! It is already dawn—I must away to my shop; oh! what a happy life, what pleasure awaits a barber of quality!—Oh! bravo, Figaro, bravo, bravissimo: thou art surely the happiest of men, ready at all hours of the night, and, by day, perpetually in bustle and motion. What happier region of delight; what nobler life for a barber than mine! Razors, combs, lancets, scissors—behold them all at my command! Besides the snug perquisites of the business, gay damsels and cavaliers all call me! all want me! dames and maidens—old and young. My peruke! cries one; My beard! shouts another; Bleed me! cries this one; This billet-doux! whispers that one. Figaro, Figaro! heavens what a crowd! Figaro!

Figaro! Heavens, what a tumult! One at a time, for mercy sake! Figaro here; Figaro there; Figaro above; Figaro below. I am all activity; I am as quick as lightning; in a word, I am the Factotum of the town. O what a happy life! but little fatigue, abundant amusement, with a pocket that can always boast a doubloon,* the noble fruit of my reputation."

Falling from music into prose-recitative, a habit in the older operas, Figaro muses over the fact that he generally has a part in all the love affairs of the town.

Overhearing the prattler, the Count Almaviva thinks he has possibly stumbled upon an opportunity. He relates to Figaro that once on the Prado at Madrid he had beheld a flower of beauty, a maid. He has, by the phantom been allured hither, and by night and day watches and wanders near this balcony.

Of course Figaro is in his element here. In his view the Count is marvelously lucky to meet him.

The Barber is ready to help. The Doctor Bartolo, with whom the girl lives, is not her father but her guardian—and in his house Figaro is both barber, perruquier, surgeon, botanist, and leech. He even treats the Doctor's horses. In fact, he is the Factotum of the household.

While the barber and the Count are speaking with bated breath, the window in the balcony opens.

Scene 3.—Rosina steals out and cautiously looks up and down the avenue. She has observed the stranger from day to day; and being under the strict surveillance of her suspicious old guardian, she hopes that this is

* A Spanish gold coin, in those days worth about five dollars.

some worthy hero, who has come to set her free. To-day she has not yet seen him, though, below, he chants to himself as he catches the first glimpse of her:

"Ah, my life! my being! my treasure!
Do I at length behold thee!"

She had prepared a note which she wished to drop to him from the balcony. The Count is about to show himself, but is frightened away by the Doctor.

The Doctor tries to learn from her the contents of her letter. Rosina deceives him by saying it is a ballad from a drama which is entitled "A Useless Precaution." While the guardian is disclaiming against the empty, barbarous substance in the drama of the day, the ward carelessly drops the missive, and tells him to go down and recover it. But before the Doctor can reach the ground, the Count has slipped out of his place of hiding and secured the note.

When the doctor cannot find the "quotation from the ballad," his suspicions are aroused; and he orders Rosina into the house, declaring that the window to the balcony shall be walled in. He is cranky, garrulous, fussy, tyrannical, and, to the girl, simply unendurable. His terrible scolding at this time leaves her in tears, which only adds pity to the devotion of the Count, and suggests the motto of the play:

"Love laughs at locksmiths."

Figaro reads Rosina's missive to the Count:

"Your earnest intentions excite my curiosity: the moment that my guardian has quit the house, sing in a careless way to the well-known air of this ballad, acquainting me with your name, your circumstances and intentions. I can never appear on the balcony without being haunted by the constant attendance of a tyrant. Be assured that everything on my part is arranged for breaking his chains. (Signed,) The Unhappy Rosina."

The Count declares he will help break the yoke of this fellow, whom the barber avers to be a hoary, daft old sinner, full of bluster—a miser who is trying to secure the girl's fortune by espousing her.

In a few moments they see the door open. The Doctor is ordering that no one shall be admitted. He is heard commanding that Don Basilio, should he come, be asked to wait for him. He decides to hurry on his marriage with Rosina. He will consummate it this very day!

"What! this dull and driveling dotard, this day to wed with Rosina!" gasps the Count.

"But pray tell me, who is this Don Basilio?"

Figaro assures the Count that he is only a meddler, a match-maker, a penniless desperado, a music teacher. He teaches music to this enslaved young lady.

Scene 4.—At the suggestion of the Barber, the Count sings his reply to her inquiries. But he does not reveal himself as the rich Count Almaviva. He wants not her adoration of his name, money, and station. He longs to have her love for himself, for him alone, of all the world:

"His name is Lindoro,
His only riches
Are those which virtue teaches,
A soul bright and youthful,
A love, pure and truthful,
With Rosina its one only aim,
While yon sun hath its splendor of flame."

To this avowal of pure affection, chivalrous, unpolluted with promises of gold or rank, Rosina responds with her entire soul; but she is suddenly torn away from the window by the tyrant Bartolo.

Scene 5.—The Count is in despair. He kept gold out of the love-question with Rosina, but finds it a strong *motive force* with the Barber. He offers Figaro gifts for quick help, and finds that they create a prodigious sympathy on the part of the Factotum. The offer of gold prompts Figaro's wits to their subtlest uses. He longs for the success of Signor Lindoro; does not conceal the cause of his sympathy, but rather emphasizes it in his song:

"The idea of the magic metal!
Omnipotent to solve the question,
With a lightning-like suggestion,
Bursts out thought like a volcano."

The Count is overjoyed at the power of his tip to the barber.

Figaro's brilliant idea is that Lindoro shall disguise himself as a soldier—a colonel. A regiment of soldiers is expected in the city; and the Count could easily be billeted at the dwelling of the guardian of Rosina. He must also assume to be drunk, for Dr. Bartolo would the less suspect a man overcome with wine.

Both men are well pleased with the jolly subterfuge.

The Count, however, takes care to assure himself of the exact whereabouts of the Barber, that he may easily find him, if needed.

A well-filled purse is promised the Barber on condition of success.

They are exceedingly joyous, and continue the duet until they separate, when the Count sings:

"How warmly glows the flame of love,
Of hope and joy auspicious sign,
Through all my frame I feel it stealing
Making soft each nobler feeling."

Figaro dwells on the thought of the tip:

"I hear the chorus of money clinking,
 Around me clinking,
 Around me clinking,
Gold and silver, fair to my thinking,
 See they come,
 See they come,
Down my pocket all descending.
Methinks I feel its weight e'en now!"

The fifth scene closes, leaving both the Count and the Barber in high spirits. The Count is hopeful of obtaining Rosina, and the Barber of getting his gold.

Scene 6.—In the sixth scene, we see Rosina sitting at the window. She is very closely watched by the hundred-eyed Argus of a guardian, who hopes to preclude other suitors by quickly closing a wedlock with her himself.

Rosina has learned that the name of her romantic suitor is Lindoro. She ponders deeply, and in the meanwhile is sealing up a letter to him. She hopes with the aid of the genial Figaro, to get it beyond the spying walls, being sure the Barber has a sympathetic feeling for their affection. She sings her Cavatina, or simple Aria, "Una Voce Poco Fa."

"Tyrant, soon I'll break thy chains,
 Sweeter bonds than thine to prove;
Passion's voice thrills thro' my veins,
 Waking all my soul to love.
All my guardian's plans, to mar,
 I, a woman's wit will show,
He'll consent, et-cet-e-ra.
 Then with bliss my soul shall glow;
I and Lindor break each bar,
 Hear me swear't, no fragile vow:
With mild and docile air,
 And playful as a lamb,
Never was a gentler fair,
 Than all confess I am,

Doves not more meek appear,
 If none provoke or chide.
 But if with tyrant sway,
 They seek my mind to fix—
 I'd die to have my way.
 A thousand, thousand tricks,
 And subtle wiles I'd play,
 Ere they my will should guide."

This was an aria in which Adelina Patti, the most brilliant songstress of her day, sang with great triumph. The version which she used was as follows:

"Young men fly when beauty darts
 Amorous glances in your hearts;
 The fixed mark gives the shorter aim,
 And ladies' looks have power to maim.
 'Twixt our lips and in our eyes,
 Wrapped in a smile, or kiss, love lies;
 Fly betimes, for only they
 Conquer love that run away."

This original cantatrice used so many embellishments in the song, introduced by her brother-in-law, Maurice Strakosch, the opera manager, that Rossini, one day in Paris, said to her in jest:

"Pray tell me, who is the composer of the piece you have sung!"

Scene 7.—In the seventh scene, the Barber and Rosina arrange for a meeting of Rosina and Lindoro. She does not yet know that Lindoro is Count Almaviva.

Scene 8.—This scene opens with Rosina saying:

"Now, I feel relieved. This Figaro is a kind creature."

Dr. Bartolo is curious to know what the Barber has said to her, and he ventures a wager that Figaro has brought an answer to the letter which Rosina had called an air from the "Useless Precaution." Her blushes betray the secret, and the old lover repeatedly trips her in the numerous extempore falsehoods that fly to her

mind in response to his grilling questions. He tells her that she shall be locked up, at his pleasure, because:

"A doctor of my importance,
Shall never be ridiculed with impunity."

Scene 9.—Scene nine is very brief. In fact, the whole opera follows the old method of calling almost every dialogue a scene. In this, Bertha, the old housemaid, is heard admitting the Count. Bertha is grieved at the treatment Rosina is subjected to, and fears the poor girl will soon find rest in the grave.

Scene 10.—The Count, disguised as a soldier, pretending drunkenness, enters and has an altercation with Dr. Bartolo. During the confusion, he gets a word with Rosina. He tells her he is Lindoro. Rosina hands him a letter, and then fibs about it to her guardian.

Scenes 11 and 12.—The disorder continues. Soldiers are summoned to take away their drunken "comrade," who finally reveals his identity to the officers, and is released.

The courtship between Lindoro and Rosina is secretly carried on, arousing the misgivings of the old guardian.

Act II

Scene 1.—The second act opens with a soliloquy by the Doctor. He is suspicious of everything, and is even alarmed by a knock at the door. We shall find that he is justified in his mistrust. But his precautions are futile, and he always is the victim of the scheming Barber.

Scene 2.—The Count, under the guidance of the witty Figaro's pranks, returns in the disguise of a music-master. He is received by the guardian, whom he deceives by a clever trick. He reports that Don Basilio,

the music-master, is ill and that he, Don Alfonso, has come to take his place. Rosina is called.

Scene 3.—In the music lesson, the two lovers pledge eternal devotion; and incidentally have a great deal of amusement at the Doctor's expense. The bogus music-master asks her what she will sing. She will sing something from the "Useless Precaution." The words are disconcerting to her guardian, but still he has to listen:

"Against a heart that's warmed by love,
With ardor not to be repressed,
In vain have cruel tyrants striven,
Their rigor ne'er could chill the breast.
Love sits supreme, and calmly smiles
Triumphant still o'er all their wiles.
Oh, Lindor, treasure of my soul!
Could you my heartless tyrant see,
His harsh treatment, his stern control,
Your breast would sympathize with me.
Lindor, beloved! kind pity take
On all my woes, for mercy sake!"

Her teacher instructs her in reply:

"Fear not, kind fate will sure befriend us
And love, almighty love! defend us."

For this Music-Lesson Scene, Rossini's music was lost, along with that of the original overture. The world's great Rosinas—as Albani, Patti, Melba, Sembrich—have utilized the opportunity for inserting the most attractive pieces of their repertoire to satisfy the repeated encores of their delighted audiences. The venturesome Patti in New York once introduced "Home, Sweet Home" into her "music lesson" with her extemporized professor.

Scene 4.—The Barber, Figaro, enters. In order to draw the attention of the doctor so as to give the lovers an opportunity to plan an elopement, he offers to give him a shave. The Doctor at first refuses, then con-

sents, and while temporarily out of the room, the Barber secures the key to the balcony, from which the girl is to escape.

Scene 5.—This scene brings more confusion; for the real music-master, Don Basilio, now arrives. But the Barber is such an excellent prevaricator that he manages to convince the music-teacher that he is really sick, and, by means of some of the Count's money, persuades the teacher to return at once to his home.

Scene 6.—Bertha, the old housemaid, is distracted with the constant turmoil of Bartolo's house. She sings her famous aria:

"There is constant noise and clamor in this house! There is nothing but disputing, weeping, and threatening. There is not a single hour of peace with this old avaricious wrangler! Oh! what a house of confusion! The little old man seeks a wife, the girl sighs for a husband; the one is all eagerness, the other a dotard. Neither of them should be suffered to go loose; but what can this love be, which makes everyone go mad? It is a universal evil, a fury, a thing that tickles, that pesters, that torments! Unhappy that I am, I also feel it, and know not what remedy to seek. Ah, cursed old age! I am despised by all; and furious and desperate, I feel ready to die with chagrin."

Scene 7.—Dr. Bartolo, however, learns from Basilio of the bogus music-teacher, and decides to wed his ward at once. He sends for a notary, while he himself goes out to arrest the rogues.

Scene 8.—The ancient guardian tries to poison Rosina's mind with the story that the Barber and Don Alfonso are planning to marry her to Count Almaviva. In great grief, she agrees to marry Dr. Bartolo, but exclaims:

"Alas! how cruel is my fate!"

Scene 9.—The Count, on being repulsed by Rosina,

reveals himself. Lindoro and Count Almaviva are the same man! He had feigned his name as Lindoro, for he wanted her to marry him for himself, and not for his name. The lovers are just now ready to leave her prison house. The Count, Rosina and Figaro, in a beautiful trio, trip lightly to the balcony, to escape.

Scene 10.—But the ladder has been taken away. Yet love will find its victory. Figaro's ready wit serves him well. The notary has arrived, to sign the wedding contract between Rosina and her guardian. The official is forcibly persuaded to substitute for Bartolo's name, the name of Count Almaviva. The matrimonial tie is made. Basilio is bribed to witness the contract, with Figaro.

Scene 11.—Dr. Bartolo arrives a moment too late. He has come with officers to arrest the lover and the Barber as "thieves." But, after listening to the explanation, although in rage, he dismisses the officers, and as graciously as possible yields to the inevitable:

"Why argue now? What is done, is done."

He gives his benediction to the happy pair:

"Go, and may heaven bless you."

CURTAIN.

Siegel-Myers Correspondence School of Music
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

A COURSE OF LESSONS IN GRAND OPERA
By NATHANIEL I. RUBINKAM, Ph. D.

Examination Paper for Lesson No. 9

The Barber of Seville

Name { Class Letter and No.
Account No.

Town State Percentage

Write name, address and numbers plainly. Fill in "Account No." only when it appears on your Lesson Ticket.

1. Whose version of the "Barber of Seville" was first played in America?

2. What date and what event marks the beginning of the History of Grand Opera in the United States?

3. What idea does the name of "Figaro" stand for in literature?

4. Name other writers who have treated of the famous Barber.

5. When was Rossini's great work written?

(over)

6. Characterize the city of Seville.
.....
.....
7. What is the secret of the long life of Rossini's "Barber of Seville" as a popular stage production?
.....
.....
8. Characterize its music.
.....
.....
9. Name the chief characters of the Opera.
.....
.....
10. What are the prominent traits of Bartolo?
.....
11. What great prima donnas have assumed the character of Rosina?
.....
12. Describe briefly the Music Lesson Scene
.....
.....
.....

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9. Name the chief characters of the Opera.

10. What are the prominent traits of Bartolo?

11. What great prima donnas have assumed the character of Rosina?

12. Describe briefly the Music Lesson Scene

Siegel-Myers
Correspondence School of Music
Chicago, Illinois

A Course of Lessons in the Study of
Grand Opera

By Nathaniel I. Rubinkam, *Ph. D.*



"Tombs of my noble fathers!
Lo! the last scion,
Sprung from a race ill-fated,
Claims from you now a refuge!"
Edgar of Ravenswood.

Lesson No. 10
The Grand Opera, LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR
by Donizetti, in One Lesson

Sir Walter Scott, the Father of Modern Romance



ONIZETTI'S opera, "Lucia di Lammermoor," is founded on the famous novel by Sir Walter Scott, "The Bride of Lammermoor." Scott's earlier genius blossomed in poesy. We all remember "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," (1805); "Marmion," (1808); and "The Lady of the Lake, (1810). Scott's keen, Scotch intellect, however, observed in a contemporary poet, in England, George Gordon Byron, a fast rising and likely successful competitor for fame in poetry. Just then Byron's keen shaft entitled: "British Bards and Scotch Reviewers," (1809), had pierced the critics who passed judgment upon his own undergraduate book of poems, "Hours of Idleness," (1807).

Whether Scott recognized in Byron his master in the field of poetry, is unknown, yet from this time on, he practically abandoned verse. Almost by chance, he happened to take up anew some chapters in a romance he had begun five years before. Four years later he finished the story. He called it "Waverly," or "Sixty Years Since," (1814).

This was the first of the long series of "Waverly Novels," (twenty-nine or thirty of them in all) which have placed his name among the immortals of the North, and carried his gospel of romance to all the world. The "Waverly Novels" made Scott not only, as Andrew Lang says, "the invisible playmate of the mind," but also made invisible playmates of all the readers of the Western World.

There may be only a few of us who have fulfilled Andrew Lang's idea and become intimate with all of Scott's novels. Many of us were reared in Puritan environments, and the Sunday School stories, the Bible and the Catechism left little spare time even for the reading of the best novels. But I suppose most of us are more or less familiar with "Guy Mannering," "Old Mortality," "The Heart of Midlothian," "The Bride of Lammermoor," "Ivanhoe," and "Kenilworth."

Through these some of us received our first ideas of chivalry, of adventure, of the great wide world.

"This magician who dwelt in the castle on the border of the North," not only had as great force as Carlyle and George Eliot of the English world, and Goethe of the German world, but also became the father of the French romantic writers. He was the inspiration of all authors of the century, both men and women. In addition to those already named, we may mention Alexander Dumas, (Pere), Honoré de Balzac and Victor Hugo. Hugo, especially, drank deep of this northern well-spring. He conceived his drama, "Amy Robsart," from Scott's "Kenilworth."

Scott, by the failure of his publishing house in which he was himself interested, became involved in bankruptcy with a debt of \$750,000. But he was an aristocrat of the olden type. He struggled on like a Titan, through failing health and grief for the rest of his days, to meet this debt. His literary earnings, together with the sale of his copyrights after his death, met his liabilities to the last cent.

It was a noble battle—the story of a gigantic struggle with debt and sickness—unique in literature and art.

Scott's Romance *The Bride of Lammermoor*



THE *Bride of Lammermoor*, written in 1819, was the eighth of the Waverly novels. I have often wondered (when considering the entire shelves of Scott's works) how it was possible for one man to put forth even the physical effort of producing this amount of material. Much of his writing was dictated by Scott, while lying upon a sofa in intense suffering. When his health permitted, he scorned such help, and wrote out everything with his own hand.

Scott required, however, two amanuenses or writers for the greater portion of "*The Bride of Lammermoor*." He preferred a man by the name of Ballantyne to take his dictation, because this man could keep down his enthusiasm better than the other writer, who could not resist the temptation of exhibiting his surprise, admiration, and delight when an especially interesting sentence flowed from the master's lips.

Scott always had the doors of his chamber closed tight so that when he must cry out from paroxysms of pain, no one could hear.

When he came to exciting passages in the dialogue, his spirit often rose above his suffering body, and, rising from the couch, he would pace up and down the room as if acting the parts he was dictating.

In the opinion of his son-in-law and biographer, John Gibson Lockhart, known in English literature as the "Second Boswell," "*The Bride of Lammermoor*" is "the

most pure and powerful of all the tragedies that Scott ever penned."

This one of Scott's novels has a certain historical basis. Its scenes portray the families of old barons in the middle of the seventeenth century. It gives us a picture of the ancient Scotch aristocracy in the southeastern region, among the hills and crumbling castles of Lammermoor.

Its theme follows the line of the great Greek tragedies. Colossal ancestral crimes are followed relentlessly by fate, or destiny, and bear fruit in the pursuits and passions of the succeeding generations until they are atoned.

The Bride of Lammermoor Dramatized

Scott's romance, "The Bride of Lammermoor," was soon translated into all European languages, and the world's playwrights saw in its story admirable material for the stage.

Some of these dramatic versions simply emphasize one character, or phase of life. Others follow the main theme, telling the whole story, minus details and characterizations. The dramatization by John William Calcraft, of "The Bride of Lammermoor," was made three years after the romance was created. It was played at the Royal Theatre of Edinburgh, in 1822.

This drama contains one-tenth of the material of the romance. It has only twenty of the characters, and yet follows consistently the thread of the entire story.

A Frenchman, Victor Ducange, does the same thing in his play in the French language. His "La Fiancée de Lammermoor" was played in Paris, in 1828.

The Bride of Lammermoor In Operatic Form

These English and French texts of "The Bride of Lammermoor" found their way into sunny Italy, the land of music, at the time that has been called "the most brilliant and inspiring period of Italian opera," the period which followed the great Rossini.

Gaetano Donizetti, the celebrated composer, one of Scott's contemporaries, was born in 1797. He died in 1848 at Bergamo, the city of his birth, in Lombardy. During his life he composed more than sixty works for the operatic stage. He felt the witchery of the Scotch story. He felt the force of Scott's romantic tale, and created from it his "Lucia di Lammermoor."

Cammarano prepared the text for the three-act opera. It has only seven characters. Donizetti improved it and himself wrote the third act. "Lucia di Lammermoor," (1835), is a masterpiece which has charmed all the world.

In the title-role of Lucia, Adelina Patti made her opera debut in 1859. Other noted singers, as Mesdames Marcella, Sembrich, Melba, Tetrizzini, and others have assumed the tragic character with marked success.

The Art of Donizetti

Mr. H. M. Ticknor, in his "Famous Composers" says of Donizetti: "His own skill with instruments and his knowledge of vocalism were of immense advantage; because, being above all things a melodist, he could adapt his airs perfectly to the singers, or to the instruments which were to carry them in the accompaniment.

"His reading and his taste led him to select strong, sympathetic subjects, preferably historical or romantic, and his dramatic disposition enabled him to make his scenes expressive and captivating

"He was fortunate and unusual in his ability to treat appropriately both humorous and serious subjects, and his melodies are eminent for their true sentiment no less than for their variety and the purely musical quality which makes them interesting and beautiful, whether they be sung or played."

Mr. George P. Upton has made the comment: "The popular verdict has stamped '*Lucia*' as Donizetti's masterpiece, and if the consensus of musicians could be obtained it would unquestionably confirm the verdict. It contains incomparably the grandest of arias for tenor—the Tomb song, in the last act—and one of the finest dramatic concerted numbers—the Sextet in the second act—that can be found in any Italian opera."



Lucia di Lammermoor

Opera in Three Acts

Text by

SALVATORE CAMMARANO

Adapted from "The Bride of Lammermoor" by Sir Walter Scott

Music by

GAETANO DONIZETTI

CHARACTERS IN THE OPERA

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Lucia di Lammermoor..... | Soprano |
| Alisa (Alice)..... | Soprano |
| Edgardo (Edgar of Ravenswood) | Tenor |
| Arturo (Lord Arthur Bucklaw)..... | Tenor |
| Normanno | Tenor |
| Enrico (Lord Henry Ashton)..... | Baritone |
| Raimondo | Bass |

Place—Scotland

Time—Seventeenth Century

First Production—Naples, 1835

ACT I.

Scene 1—Ante-chamber in the Castle of Lammermoor.

Scene 2—Fountain of the Blind.

ACT II.

Scene 1—Hall in Castle of Lammermoor.

ACT III.

Scene 1—Hall in the Wolf's Crag of the Ravenswoods.

Scene 2—Banquet Hall at Lammermoor.

Scene 3—Burial ground at Ravenswood.

NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION.

Donizétti—dŏn-nēē-tzĕ-tēē.

Luciá di Lámmermoor—lu-chēēa dee lām-mer-mōōr.

Alisa—a-lēē-sā.

Normánno—nor-mān-nō.

Edgárdo—ed-gār-dō.

Enrico—ān-rēē-kō.

Artúro—ar-tu-ro.

Raimóndo—rā-mōn-dō.

Act I

SCENE 1. The opening scene is an ante-chamber in the Castle of Lammermoor on the southeastern coast of Scotland.

The castle is occupied by Sir Henry Ashton and his sister, Lucy, (Lucia).

The ancient aristocratic family of the Ashtons, amid the revolutions of the seventeenth century, and through careless, rash indulgence, finds itself in evil fortune, in fact, on the very brink of financial and social ruin.

Besides this, Lord Henry Ashton has been involved in a government conspiracy, and is now an object of some suspicion. If he should suddenly be attacked by his political foes, he might at once meet disaster, even to a complete overthrow of his power.

Mystery and suspicion lurk about. His steward and retainers are on the lookout—some exploring the neighboring woodland, others stationed in the high old ruined tower, to spy out any threatening danger.

There is one special foe that Sir Henry fears—and that is the old Baronial family of Ravenswood, which the Ashton clan has been for a long time supplanting.

Edgar of Ravenswood, the hero of the play, the last of the old baronial line, is still living in the crumbling castle, called "Wolf's Crag."

He takes every occasion to deride the power of the Ashtons. They, on the other hand, fear this lingering bitter enemy. To understand the story clearly, we must keep in mind that these two baronial families, the Ashtons and the Ravenswoods, are bitter, implacable foes.

Sir Henry Ashton's only hope of recovering his fortunes, and safe standing with the government lies in his sister, Lucy Ashton.

If he can marry her to a certain nobleman, Sir Arthur Bucklaw, all will be well. Sir Arthur, though temperamentally somewhat wild, stands high in office. His position would be sufficient to turn aside the political dangers with which Sir Henry is threatened.

If Lucy Ashton will marry Sir Arthur Bucklaw, how easy the path to fortune! Bucklaw is pledged and stands ready to bestow wealth and safety with his hand. But Lucy's tutor knows that she does not love Sir Arthur Bucklaw.. The steward, Norman, knows another secret. When Lucia had retired to a "lone and deep-secluded" spot, to mourn at her late mother's tomb, a mad and furious bull had charged at her through the forest. But just before the beast reached her, it had been felled by a whistling rifle-ball.

Lucia's heart had been won by her rescuer, and Norman's suspicions have fallen on Edgar of Ravenswood, Ashton's deadly enemy.

The mystery of Lucia's deliverance is wrapped up in the mystery of her love for Sir Edgar of Ravenswood.

This revelation falls on Henry's soul with terrible force. He gives vent to his rage with the baritone aria:

"Fury, remorseless, shocking!"

While Sir Henry is raving, the chorus of hunters returns, and in a song beginning:

"Faint and spent, fatigued and weary,
Long we searched from hour to hour,
Seeking rest through portals dreary,
Entered we the ruined tower,"

confirms the report. It is Edgar of Ravenswood who was Lucia's deliverer, and who is now her lover.

Sir Henry intones his vengeance in an aria:

"Now no pity for him restrains me."

SCENE 2. Do you remember the "Fountain of the Blind" where the fated Pelleas and Melisande met in the Maeterlinck-Debussy opera?

We find also a "Fountain of the Blind" among the hills of Lammermoor, because in Scotch superstition, a mysterious fate hangs over its past.

Here at a fountain in the wood Lucia and her maid, Alice, are waiting for the coming of Edgar. While impatient with waiting, the maid fears that they may be discovered by Lucia's brother. Lucia is certainly braving fate by risking his rage.

But Lucia is filled with greater terror. Her gaze is riveted on that old fountain. Here once, as an ancient tale relates, a Knight of Ravenswood murdered his lady-love and threw her body into its waters. They are now haunted by her spirit.

Once the spirit of the hapless woman did appear to Lucia, on the brink of the fountain, and as she gestured toward the waters, they turned into blood.

The story is told in Lucia's famed aria:

"Nature seemed wrapped in silence!"

It seems that the omen warned Lucia to drive Edgar's loved image from her soul. But she cannot. To her, his love is the light of heaven! It is

"The boon that comforts her wounded heart."

Thus she sings in brighter vein:

"Love wraps my soul in ecstasy,
Filling my heart with gladness,
Shadowing forth his faith to me,
That thought alone dispels all sadness.
No more my tears of grief must flow,
Sorrow before it must vanish:
Once more I shall be happy
In love restored to me."

The waiting maid warns her against so joyous a hope. Then espying Sir Edgar of Ravenswood approach, she withdraws among the trees.

Sir Edgar rushes in to embrace his love. He craves her pardon for asking this secret meeting, but he is about to depart for France on an embassy in the interests of Scotland and before he departs, he wishes to break down the barriers which stand between the hostile baronial houses. He will go to Sir Henry Ashton, her brother, proffer his friendship, and as a bond of peace will ask her hand in marriage.

Lucia implores him not to pursue this intention. Instead they will keep their alliance a secret from her brother, even through suffering.

Sir Edgar sees her motive. He knows of Sir Henry's implacable rage—the persecuting flame in his breast. Lucia's brother had slain the elder Ravenswood, *his* father. He had usurped his heritage, and is still hunting him down.

Sir Edgar's anger grows as he thinks of the past. He remembers that upon his father's grave, he had sworn vengeance. Over the ashes of his sire he had vowed to wage eternal warfare against the Ashtons, her kindred. When he had seen her, he had repented, but that vow remained recorded. Spite of fate, it could still be fulfilled.

Lucia pleads in tenderest words:

"Let not love by anger e'er be weakened,
'Tis a passion far more holy!
Let it, then, the noblest prove
Of all thy vows, the vows of love."

Edgar again relents. He will forego all thoughts of vengeance, if she will vow to him eternal fidelity. They

together plight their troth. They exchange rings of betrothal. Eternal Nature witnesses their vows.

In separating, they sing together the touching duet:

"Upon the breeze to thee shall fly
My sighs and vows the sincerest;
The wave my plaints shall murmur by
In echoes the fondest, dearest.
Think, on my bosom's anguish deep
I pine, nor this deny,
One tear of pity weep, oh weep,
And breathe one ardent sigh,
Ah, yes, one ardent sigh."

As they part, they promise that while he is gone, missives of love shall daily be exchanged between Scotland and France.

Act II

SCENE 1. Edgar's letters from France, however, fail to reach the hands of Lucia. They are all intercepted by her brother's steward. Sir Henry's conscience knows no scruple. His one desperate determination is to marry his sister to Lord Arthur Bucklaw.

It is absolutely necessary to Sir Henry's political safety to have his sister make this alliance. When a man once plunges into a political program, no act of perfidy is impossible. And in spite of Lucia's protests, he makes all preparations for the marriage. He bids her to banish her love for Edgar of Ravenswood as a guilty insanity, and "accept a noble husband."

Her brother has already sent to Edinburgh, "the stately city of Scotland," to have Lord Bucklaw conducted hither in state. He brings his treasonable procedure to a climax by showing her a letter, purporting to come from Sir Edgar in France, renouncing his engagement pledge and declaring he has wedded another.

Lucia's heart, thus chilled, gives vent in an aria :

"With suffering and weeping,"

in which she declares that if that love proves faithless, most welcome to her will be the death-moment.

Her words are stifled with the festive march of the approaching bridegroom. An icy chill courses through her heart as her brother, with his denunciation of Sir Edgar, mingles his appeal that her marriage with Sir Arthur Bucklaw alone can save him from the penalty of his treason against the king, which has been detected.

The brother and sister sing the duet :

Henry. "O'er thy brother death's impending,
On thy act my life's depending;
Thy refusal will be sending
Me to meet a rebel's fate.

Lucia. Canst thou see me weeping, languish,
And behold my heart's deep anguish,
Yet expect that thou canst vanquish
All my loathing for such a fate?"

The chorus of a wedding march now sounds out the festal song, beginning :

"Hail, to this day of jubilee."

Sir Arthur cordially greets the beautiful girl. He deeply admires the attractive Lucia of Lammermoor, though he scorns the fact that the young baron, Sir Edgar, should have had the mad presumption to woo her.

Lucia returns the greeting with a dazed apathy, which her brother explains as due to grief for their mother's death. She walks like a victim forced to the sacrifice. To save her brother's life, she signs the marriage contract.

Her chaplain, Raymond, the Scotch minister, finely characterized in Scott's novel, is only touched upon in the opera; this man, always a willing tool of the party in power, has advised her, led her to the deed of signature, and now seals her act with his blessing.

No sooner have the nuptial rites, which ceremoniously bind Lucia to Sir Arthur Bucklaw, been completed, than the company is shocked by the entrance of a stranger, heavily cloaked.

The intruder proves to be none other than Sir Edgar of Ravenswood. He has arrived from France and strides in to claim his plighted bride.

The assemblage is thrown into consternation, and the two, time-long rivals, with all of the old spirit of revenge, stare at each other, face to face.

Lucia, who has fainted, is raised by her maid and the ladies, and placed in a chair. And here occurs one of the most world-famed musical ensembles in the literature of the opera.

This is the famous Sextet of Lucia di Lammermoor, between Sir Edgar of Ravenswood, Sir Henry Ashton, Sir Arthur Bucklaw, Lucia, Norman, the steward, and Raymond, the chaplain. All of the rival passions, the varied emotions, the conflicting motives which have run through the pages of the opera, here find masterly expression in this beautiful concerted number.

The chaplain shows Sir Edgar the contract, signed! But Edgar will not believe it until he receives from the dazed and bewildered girl, her subdued and trembling, "Yes," her tongue refusing further speech!

Sir Edgar refuses to quit the place. He says to Sir Henry:

"By my dead father's ashes,
Thy blood will I drain."

Driven to the very summit of fury, he snatches her ring from his finger, the ring she had given him at their betrothal, flings it at her, and wrathfully demands his.

Lucia, dazed, almost unconsciously removes the ring from her finger. Edgar seizes it, throws it on the ground, stamps on it, declares her faithless like her kindred, and rushes away, cursing the whole race of Ashtons.

Act III

SCENE 1. Sir Edgar has repaired to the decaying and crumbling castle of Ravenswood, known as Wolf's Crag, high on a beetling rock, overlooking the desolate wastes of the East sea-coast.

He sits with gloomy forebodings in a dismantled hall—while the winds without seem to bemoan the fate which has fallen on his race. He sings:

“Dark is the night and stormy,
Dark are the paths before me,
Roll on thou thunder!
Flash on ye kindred fires of heaven!
Convulsed then be all the course of nature,
And end the world now!”

He hears the stamp of horses feet! It is the approach of Sir Henry Ashton. He has come from the nuptial festivities of Lucia and Lord Arthur Bucklaw. His heart had beaten with the thought of vengeance and now he has braved the wild tempest, to make Sir Edgar of Ravenswood atone his wrongs.

Sir Henry has met his rival in the right temper! Edgar, through this gloomy night, has visioned his father's spirit taunting him for not revenging inherited wrongs. He has sworn to smite the despoiler of his happiness.

The two barons quickly agree upon a duel, to be fought the very next morning in the graveyard of Ravenswood. Sir Henry Ashton hastens back to the marriage.

merriment in the banquet hall at the Castle of Lammermoor.

SCENE 2. But the sounds of gladness are soon hushed. The banqueting revels are suddenly changed to a scene of terror.

When Lucia had retired with Sir Arthur Bucklaw to the bridal chamber, her mind had succumbed to the fearful strain it had undergone. She had seized the weapon of her enforced husband, and had slain him in his bed-chamber.

When found by the chaplain and steward, Lucia was brandishing the sword above him in triumph, and with wild eyes, as though piercing through vacancy for Edgar, was crying:

“Where is my husband!”

Soon the young woman finds her way back to the hall of revelry, and there occurs what is called “The Mad Scene” in the opera. The distraught girl, with disheveled hair, still wielding the sword, every fibre of her being trembling, fancies that her enemies are all vanquished, that she is restored to Sir Edgar, near the fountain. But the horrid phantom again rises. She will fly with her betrothed to the altar—

“Ah! what felicity!”

In her delirium, she sings the great aria:

“Oh! joy that now inspires me!”

She imagines and pictures their bridal scene and their happiness restored. To Sir Henry Ashton, who enters with threats of penalty for her crime, she sings another aria:

“Oh, shed one tear of pity!”

Lucia’s vital forces are completely exhausted through the long tension, by the struggle between ecstasy and

anguish in her mind, and she succumbs at last in death. The end of the Bride of Lammermoor has come.

SCENE 3. Out yonder in the bleak burying ground by the tombs of his fathers, Sir Edgar of Ravenswood is sitting, awaiting the morning and the duel with Sir Henry Ashton. The last scion of an unhappy race, his brooding spirit can see no happier boon than death by the weapon of his foe. He sings of the mouldering grave as his peaceful refuge.

This is the celebrated tenor aria at the tomb:

"Tombs of my noble fathers!
Lo! the last scion
Sprung from a race ill-fated,
Claims from you now a refuge!
Quenched now is anger,
Flame, brief and fitful.
On my foe's weapon
Now desperate I'll rush."

Some strollers from Lammermoor bring him the story of Lucia's fate. The chorus sings:

"Since her most unhappy union
She hath been bereft of reason. * * *
Her last hour with speed approacheth,
Her love for thee remains!"

Then Raymond, the chaplain arrives, and tells him that her spirit has fled this life. Not waiting longer the result of the duel, with a dying aria, he takes his own life, to rejoin her, "to find her!"

CURTAIN.

Siegel-Myers Correspondence School of Music
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

A COURSE OF LESSONS IN GRAND OPERA

By **NATHANIEL I. RUBINKAM, Ph. D.**

Examination Paper for Lesson No. 10

Donizetti and his Opera Lucia di Lammermoor

Name { Class Letter and No.
Account No.

Town.....State.....Percentage.....

Write name, address and numbers plainly. Fill in "Account No." only when it appears on your Lesson Ticket.

1. Give the name and the author of the romance on which this opera is founded

2. Name five of this author's other novels, and show how he influenced other great writers of his time.....

3. At what time did Donizetti live and through what sources did he get the story for his opera?.....

4. In what country and at what period is the action of the opera laid?

(OVER)

5. Name its chief characters, very briefly describing each.....
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6. What was the legend associated with the "Fountain of the Blind?".....
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7. Who are the singers of the famous Sextet of "Lucia di Lammermoor?".....
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8. What is the "Mad Scene" in "Lucia?".....
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9. How does the opera end?.....
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10. In what does Donizetti's music excel?.....
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11. Why is "Lucia di Lammermoor" considered Donizetti's masterpiece?.....
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