VINCENZO BELLINI

La Sonnambula

OPERA IN TWO ACTS
LIBRETTO BY FELICE ROMANI

Amina	**Maria Callas**
Elvino	**Nicola Monti**
Il conte Rodolfo	**Nicola Zaccaria**
Teresa	**Fiorenza Cossotto**
Lisa	**Edith Martelli**
Alessio	**Dino Mantovani**
Un notaro	**Franco Ricciardi**

Orchestra and Chorus of the Piccola Scala, Milan
Antonino Votto

KING'S THEATRE ~ EDINBURGH
Recorded live, August 26, 1957

Piccola Scala XI Festival Internazionale di Edimburgo.
Chorus master **Norberto Mola.** Stage designer **Luchino Visconti.**
Stage director **Nicola Benois.** Costume designer **Piero Tosi.**
Assistant master **Giuseppe di Luggo.** Prompter master **Vasco Naldini.**
Scenery painted by **Luigi Brilli, Vincenzo Pignataro** and **Gino Romei.**

Maria Callas COLLECTION
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Track List

COMPACT DISC 1 [57.18]

ACT I

1 • Viva! Viva Amina! [2.51]
Chorus

2 • Tutto è gioia, tutto è festa [2.34]
Lisa / Alessio / Chorus

3 • In Elvezia non v'ha rosa [3.29]
Chorus / Lisa / Alessio

4 • Care compagne (Amina / Chorus) [2.07]

5 • Come per me sereno [3.01]
Amina / all

6 • Sovra il sen la man mi posa [2.45]
Amina / Chorus

7 • Io più di tutti, o Amina [2.17]
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8 • Perdona o mia diletta [2.38]
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10 • Ah, vorrei trovar parole [2.47]
Amina / Elvino / all / Lisa

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12 • Come noioso e lungo [1.08]
Rodolfo / Lisa / all

13 • Vi ravviso, o luoghi ameni [2.29]
Rodolfo / all

14 • Ma fra voi, se non mi inganno [2.22]
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15 • Contezza del paese [3.07]
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19 • Son geloso del zefiro errante [7.24]
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8 • Qui la selva è più folta ed ombrosa [5.48]
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9 • Reggimi, o buona madre [4.15]
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10 • Vedi, o madre... È afflitto e mesto [3.24]
Amina / Elvino

11 • Viva il conte! [1.21]
Chorus / Elvino / Amina / Teresa

12 • Ah perchè non posso odiarti [1.49]
Elvino / Teresa / Chorus

13 • E fia pur vero, Elvino [2.07]
Lisa / Elvino / All / Rodolfo / Alessio

14 • Signor conte, agli occhi miei [2.09]
Elvino / Rodolfo / Chorus / Lisa

15 • Piano, amici: non gridate [2.08]
Teresa / Chorus / Lisa

16 • Signor?... che creder deggio? [2.28]
Elvino / Rodolfo / Chorus / Teresa

17 • Oh! se una volta sola [5.34]
Amina / Rodolfo / Teresa / all

18 • Ah, non credea mirarti [5.09]
Amina / Elvino

19 • No più non reggo [2.05]
Elvino / Amina / Rodolfo / all

20 • Ah! non giunge uman pensiero [4.19]
Amina / all

21 • Radio announcer [0.58]

Callas' Second Sonnambula Broadcast from Edinburgh

by Milan Petkovic

In the summer of 1957, Maria Callas was invited to perform Bellini's *La Sonnambula* with the La Piccola Scala ensemble at the Eleventh Edinburgh International Festival. On 7 August, however, Callas' doctor found her in a state of nervous exhaustion and fatigue caused by a strenuous work schedule and prescribed at least thirty days of complete rest. Despite his advice, Callas agreed to sing four performances, given that her participation at the Festival was of the utmost importance to La Scala. She arrived in Edinburgh on 17 August as planned, and sang *La Sonnambula* on four evenings; the second (DVN~9) and third (DVN~6) performances were broadcast by the BBC radio. Because the performances enjoyed great success, the Scala management exerted pressure on Callas to give an additional one. Furthermore, they announced Callas' participation in a fifth *Sonnambula* without consulting her first. Given the precarious state of Callas' health at that time, which was further aggravated by the cold climate, she declined to give the uncontracted fifth performance and departed on 30 August, thus creating a serious strain in her relations with La Scala. (The last Edinburgh *Sonnambula*, performed and broadcast on 3 September, featured the young Renata Scotto in the title role; it was an important event in the early stage of Scotto's remarkable career.) This event, as well as the notorious Rome walkout of 2 January 1958 (DVN~7), ultimately led to a break between Callas and the La Scala management, resulting in the soprano's thirty-month absence from the Milan stage.

Harold Rosenthal wrote about Callas' Edinburgh performances in Musical America: "According to reports, opening night [19 August] found her in far from good voice. The second and third performances ... displayed the singer at her very best and very worst; in the fourth, which I heard, the soprano was in excellent voice..." Whatever the state of Callas' health and the opinions of the public and critics may have been, her voice does sound captivating and fresh in this second broadcast; it is hardly white or threadbare, as some critics have remarked. Whether it is because of the recorded sound or closer miking, her voice sounds fuller and stronger than in the recording of the Cologne performance. The interpretation is also more inspiringly and delicately shaded at many points. Callas exudes grace, charm, and agility. Lovely and expressive *diminuendi* are present throughout (such as one on the climactic B-flat in the cavatina's cadenza, not attempted in the complete commercial recording). The bravura passages in "Sovra il sen" are executed with Callas' accustomed brilliance, the interpolated E-flat in alt is in focus compared with the off-center note heard in the 21 August performance. The following recitatives with Alessio and Lisa are sung in a disarmingly simple and natural conversational manner. The amorous sentiments this Amina feels for her fiancé shine through the phrase "Caro Elvino, alfin tu giungi!", whilst "Il cor soltanto" is colored with a touch of regret and melancholy but also hushed ardor. With Callas, silence often has as much importance as the notes themselves; the effect of the slight pause between "Oh..." and "...tenera parola" in the following duet is telling in that regard, enhancing the word "tenera" in a highly expres-

sive manner. In contrast to the commercial recording, Elvino's lines at the conclusion of "Ah vorrei trovar parole" are omitted; Callas alone caps the duet with a full, prolonged A-flat. The only awkward moment in this recording is the abrupt break in the cadenza at the end of "A fosco cielo, a notte bruna," probably a memory lapse or misjudgment of breath on Callas' part. In the subsequent duet with Elvino, Callas endows Amina's lines with a wide spectrum of emotions – from the sorrow and hurt of "Ingrato! e dir mel puoi?" to the loving tenderness and delicacy of "Amo il rio, perchè l'onda ti da." Trills and *fioriture* are impeccably executed, top notes rock-solid, and the volume of Callas' voice covers that of Nicola Monti in several places.

In the Sleepwalking scene of the Act I, her phrasing is memorable and deeply felt: "Prendi... la man ti stendo", "Oh madre mia", or "Non mi sostiene il pie". Callas' Amina falls into deep slumber before properly finishing the last note in the final "alfin sei mio" – a telling interpretive detail. Upon the heroine's abrupt awakening, there is innocent disbelief at "Qui?... perchè? Chi mi v'ha spinta?" at first, then genuine grief at "Che feci io mai? Oh mio dolor!". In the "D'un pensiero" ensemble, Amina's protestations of innocence and gentle reprimands to Elvino are equally moving and effective. This is particularly evident in the phrase "Mal rispondi a tanto amor" at the end of the introductory solo and the line soaring to a high B-flat toward the ensemble's conclusion; both include wonderful *diminuendi* that are better realized than on the commercial recording. Furthermore, Amina's pain and frustration in the following section ("Deh! m'ascolta! ... Non è questa, ingrato core") are rendered with less dark and dramatic accentuation than on EMI, therefore flowing more naturally and convincingly.

Callas continues effectively in the recitatives at the beginning of Act II, and her cry of "Ah, il mio anello! Oh madre!" would melt a heart of stone. The concluding Sleepwalking Scene is sung as hauntingly as ever. "E pur... rea non son io" is particularly touching, and a better effect than on EMI is achieved at "Ancor ti bacio, ancor ti bacio," with less pressure put on the voice. As in the recording of the 21 August performance, the cavatina is subtly shaded and deeply moving. It is sung with a pure, delicately rounded and plangent (if not always ideally steady) tone, without any memory lapses, in contrast to the Cologne performance of the aria. Amina's awakening is less effective than on EMI, but the cabaletta, sung with admirable elegance, offers a lovely interpretative insight. The first verse deliberately sounds somewhat reserved, almost hesitant, as though Amina cannot fully believe her regained happiness. The second verse is more open and energetic, conveying the heroine's final acceptance of the bliss sorely denied her since her awakening in the Count's room.

Sadly, this recording is Maria Callas' final complete *Sonnambula* documented in sound. After the Edinburgh performance of 29 August 1957, Callas never sang Amina on the stage again, returning to this music only for a televised concert of May 1965, where she sang the final cavatina and its preceding recitative. The present recording of 26 August 1957, the last recorded performance of one of Callas' greatest roles, has never been released before in its entirety.

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La Sonnambula

Melodramma in due atti

Libretto di Felice Romani
Musica di Vincenzo Bellini

Personaggi:

Il Conte Rodolfo, *signore del villaggio* – basso
Teresa, *molinara* – mezzosoprano
Amina, *orfanella raccolta da Teresa* – soprano
Elvino, *ricco possidente del villaggio* – tenore
Lisa, *ostessa amante di Elvino* – soprano
Alessio, *sontadino, amante di Lisa* – basso
Un notaro – tenore
Contadini e contadine

Epoca: indefinita
Luogo: un villaggio della Svissera

NOTE:
The words in red indicate portions that were omitted in this performance.

Atto primo

Villaggio.
In fondo al teatro si scorge il mulino di Teresa: un torrente ne fa girare la ruota.

Scena prima
All'alzarsi del sipario odonsi da lungi suoni pastorali e voci lontane che gridano: Viva Amina! sono gli abitanti del villaggio che vengono a festeggiare gli sponsali di lei.

Coro *(interno)*
Viva! viva Amina!
La la la...
Evviva Amina!
Evviva ancor!
Ah!
(Esce Lisa dall'Osteria, indi Alessio dai colli.)

Lisa
Tutto è gioia, tutto è festa...
Sol per me non v'ha contento,
E per colmo di tormento
Son costretta a simular.
O beltade a me funesta,
Che m'involi il mio tesoro,
Mentre io soffro, mentre moro,
Pur ti deggio accarezzar!

Coro
Viva Amina!
Viva ancor!

Lisa
Tutto è festa...
Sol per me ah! non v'ha...
Tutto è gioia *ecc.*

Coro
Viva Amina!...
La la la... *ecc.*

Alessio
Lisa! Lisa!...

Lisa *(per partire)*
Oh l'importuno!
(Scendono dalle colline Villani e Villanelle, tutti vestiti da festa, con strumenti villerecci e canestri di fiori. Giungono al piano.)

Alessio
Ah! tu mi fuggi!...

Lisa
Fuggo ognuno.

Alessio
Ah! non sempre, o bricconcella,
Fuggirai da me così.
Per te pure, o Lisa bella,
Giungerà di nozze il dì.
(Durante il colloquio di Lisa e di Alessio, i suoni si sono fatti più vicini, e più forti le acclamazioni.)

Scena seconda

Alessio
Viva Amina! viva ancor!

Lisa *(indispettita)*
(Anch'esso!
Oh dispetto!)

Alessio
Qui schierati... più d'appresso...

Lisa
(Ah! la rabbia mi divora!...)

Alessio e Coro
La canzone preparata
Intuonar di qui si può.

Lisa
(Ogni speme è a me troncata:
La rivale trionfò.)

Alessio e Coro
In Elvezia non v'ha rosa
Fresca e cara al par d'Amina:
È una stella mattutina,
Tutta luce, tutta amor.
Ma pudica, ma ritrosa,
Quanto è vaga, quanto è bella:
È innocente tortorella,
È l'emblema del candor.

Lisa
(Ah! per me sì lieti canti
Destinati un dì credei:
Crudo amor, che sian per lei
Non ho cor di sopportar.)

Alessio *(avvicinandosi a Lisa)*
(Lisa mia, sì lieti canti
Risuonar potran per noi,
Se pietosa alfin tu vuoi
Dare ascolto al mio pregar.)

Coro
Viva ancor!
Ah...
Te felice e avventurato
Più d'un prence e d'un sovrano,
Bel garzon, che la sua mano
Sei pur giunto a meritar.
Tal tesoro amor t'ha dato
Di bellezza e di virtude
Che quant'oro il mondo chiude,
Che niun re potria comprar.
È innocente *ecc.*
Viva!

Scena terza
Amina, Teresa e detti.

Amina
Care compagne, e voi,
Teneri amici, che alla gioia mia
Tanta parte prendete, oh come dolci
Scendon d'Amina al core
I canti che v'inspira il vostro amore!

Coro
Vivi felice! è questo
Il comun voto, o Amina.

Amina
A te, diletta,
Tenera madre, che a sì lieto giorno
Me orfanella serbasti, a te favelli
Questo, dal cor più che dal ciglio espresso,
Dolce pianto di gioia, e quest'amplesso.
(con tenero accento)
Compagne... teneri amici...
Ah! madre... ah! qual gioia!
Come per me sereno
Oggi rinacque il dì!
Come il terren fiorì
Più bello e ameno!
Mai di più lieto aspetto
Natura non brillò;
Amor la colorò
Del mio diletto.

Coro
Sempre, o felice Amina,
Sempre per te così
Infiori il cielo i dì
Che ti destina...

Amina
(abbraccia Teresa, e prendendole una mano, se l'avvicina al core)
Sovra il sen la man mi posa,
Palpitar, balzar lo senti:
Egli è il cor che i suoi contenti
Non ha forza a sostener.

Teresa e Coro
Di tua sorte avventurosa
Teco esulta il cor materno:
Non potea favor superno
Riserbarlo a ugual piacer.

Alessio
Io più di tutti, o Amina,
Teco mi rallegro. Io preparai la festa,
Io feci la canzone; io radunai
De' vicini villaggi i suonatori.

Amina
E grata a' tuoi favori,
Buon Alessio, son io.
Fra poco io spero
Ricambiarteli tutti, allor che sposo
Tu di Lisa sarai, se, come è voce,
Essa a farti felice ha il cor disposto.

Alessio
La senti, o Lisa?

Lisa
No, non sarà sì tosto.

Alessio
Sei pur crudele!

Teresa
E perché mai?

Lisa
L'ignori?
Schiva son io d'amori;
Mia libertà mi piace.

Amina
Ah! tu non sai
Quanta felicità riposta sia
In un tenero amor.

Lisa
Sovente amore
Ha soave principio e fine amaro.

Teresa
Vedi l'ipocrisia!

Coro
Viene il Notaro.

Scena quarta
Il Notaro e detti.

Amina
Il Notaro? Ed Elvino
Non è presente ancor?

Notaro
Di pochi passi
Io lo precedo; in capo al bosco
Io lo mirai da lungi.

Coro
Eccolo.

Amina
Caro Elvino! alfin tu giungi.

Scena quinta
Elvino e detti.

Elvino
Perdona, o mia diletta,
Il breve indugio. In questo dì solenne
Ad implorar ne andai sui nostri nodi
D'un angelo il favor: prostrato al marmo
Dell'estinta mia madre! oh! benedici
La mia sposa! le dissi. Ella possiede
Tutte le tue virtudi; ella felice
Renda il tuo figlio qual rendesti il padre.
Ah! lo spero, ben mio, m'udì la madre.

Amina
Oh! fausto augurio!

Tutti
È van
Esso non fia.

Elvino
Siate voi tutti, o amici,
Al contratto presenti.
(Il Notaro si dispone a stendere il contratto.)

Notaro
Elvin, che rechi
Alla tua sposa in dono?

Elvino
I miei poderi,
La mia casa, il mio nome,
Ogni bene di cui son possessore.

Notaro
E Amina?...

Amina
Il cor soltanto.

Elvino
Ah! tutto è il core!
(Mentre la madre sottoscrive, e con essa i testimoni,Elvino presenta l'anello ad Amina.)
Prendi: l'anel ti dono
Che un dì recava all'ara
L'alma beata e cara
Che arride al nostro amor.
Sacro ti sia tal dono
Come fu sacro a lei;
Sia de' tuoi voti e miei
Fido custode ognor.

Coro
Scritti nel ciel già sono,
Come nel vostro cor.

Elvino
Sposi or noi siamo.

Amina
Sposi!...
Oh! tenera parola!

Elvino
Cara! nel sen ti posi
(Le dà un mazzetto.)
Questa gentil viola.

Amina
Puro, innocente fiore!

Elvino
Ei mi rammenti a te.

Amina
Ah! non ne ha d'uopo il core.

Amina ed Elvino
Caro/a!
Dal dì che univa
I nostri cori un Dio,
Con te rimase il mio,
Il tuo con me restò.

Teresa, Alessio e Coro
Scritti nel ciel *ecc.*

Amina
Ah! vorrei trovar parole
A spiegar com'io t'adoro!
Ma la voce, o mio tesoro,
Non risponde al mio pensier.

Elvino
Tutto, ah! tutto in quest'istante
Parla a me del foco ond'ardi:
Io lo leggo ne' tuoi sguardi,
Nel tuo riso lusinghier!
L'alma mia nel tuo sembiante
Vede appien la tua scolpita,
E a lei vola, è in lei rapita
Di dolcezza e di piacer!

Teresa, Alessio e Coro
Ah! così negli occhi vostri
Core a core ognor si mostri:
Legga ognor qual legge adesso
L'un nell'altro un sol pensier.

Amina
Ah! mio ben! Spiegar nol so.

Lisa
(Il dispetto in sen represso
Più non valgo a sostener.)

Elvino
Tu m'adori?

Amina
Ah! la mia voce...

Elvino
Mio caro bene!...

Amina
Ah non risponde al mio pensier.
Ah! vorrei trovar *ecc.*

Elvino
Domani, appena aggiorni,
Ci recheremo al tempio e il nostro imene
Sarà compiuto da più santo rito.
(Odesi suon di sferza e calpestìo di cavalli.)
Qual rumore!

Coro *(accorrendo)*
Cavalli!

Amina
Un forestiero.

Scena sesta
Rodolfo e due postiglioni.

Rodolfo *(dal fondo)*
Come noioso e lungo
Il cammin mi sembrò!
(S 'avanza.)
Distanti ancora
Dal castel siam noi?

Lisa
Tre miglia, e giunti
Non vi sarete fuor che a notte oscura,
Tanto alpestre è la via. Fino a domani
Qui posar vi consiglio.

Rodolfo
E lo desìo.
Avvi albergo al villaggio?

Lisa
Eccovi il mio.

Rodolfo *(esaminando l'osteria)*
Quello?

Coro
Quello.

Rodolfo
Ah! lo conosco.

Lisa
Voi, signor?

Amina, Lisa, Teresa, Elvino e Coro
(Costui chi fia?)

Rodolfo
Il mulino... il fonte... il bosco...
E vicin la fattoria!...
(Vi ravviso, o luoghi ameni,
In cui lieti, in cui sereni
Sì tranquillo i dì passai
Della prima gioventù!
Cari luoghi, io vi trovai,
Ma quei dì non trovo più!)
Amina, Lisa, Teresa, Elvino e Coro
(Del villaggio è conscio assai:
Quando mai costui vi fu?)

Rodolfo
Vi ravviso *ecc.*
Ma fra voi, se non m'inganno,
Oggi ha luogo alcuna festa.

Coro
Fauste nozze qui si fanno.

Rodolfo
E la sposa? è quella?
(accennando Lisa)

Coro *(additando Amina)*
È questa.

Rodolfo
È gentil, leggiadra molto...
Ch'io ti miri. Oh!... il vago volto!...
Tu non sai con quei begli occhi
Come dolce il cor mi tocchi,
Qual richiami ai pensier miei
Adorabile beltà.
Era dessa, qual tu sei,
Sul mattino dell'età.

Lisa
(Ella sola è vagheggiata!)

Elvino
(Da quei detti è lusingata!)

Coro
(Son cortesi, son galanti
Gli abitanti di città.)

Rodolfo
(fra sé)
Era dessa!... sul mattino... dell'età!...
(ad Amina)
Ch'io ti miri! Ah qual volto!
Tu non sai *ecc.*

Elvino
Contezza del paese
Avete voi, signor?

Rodolfo
Vi fui da giovinetto
Col signor del castello.

Teresa
Oh! il buon signore!
È morto or son quattr'anni!

Rodolfo
E ne ho dolore!
Egli mi amò qual figlio...

Teresa
Ed un figlio egli avea; ma dal castello
Sparve il giovane un dì, né più novella
N'ebbe l'afflitto padre.

Rodolfo
A' suoi congiunti
Nuova io ne reco e certa. Ei vive.

Lisa
E quando
Alla terra natìa farà ritorno?

Coro
Ciascun lo brama.

Rodolfo
Lo vedrete un giorno.
(Odesi il suono delle cornamuse che riducono gli armenti all'ovile.)

Teresa
Ma... il sol tramonta: è d'uopo
Prepararsi a partir.

Amina, Lisa, Elvino e Coro
Partir?...
(Teresa fa che tutti a lei s'avvicinino.)

Teresa *(con gran mistero)*
Sapete
Che l'ora s'avvicina in cui si mostra
Il tremendo fantasma.

Coro
E vero! è vero!

Rodolfo
Qual fantasma?

Amina, Lisa, Teresa, Elvino e Coro
È un mistero
Un oggetto d'orror!

Rodolfo
Follie!

Teresa e Coro
Che dite?
Se sapeste, signor...

Rodolfo
Narrate.

Coro
Udite.
A fosco cielo, a notte bruna,
Al fioco raggio d'incerta luna,
Al cupo suono di tuon lontano
Dal colle al pian un'ombra appar.
In bianco avvolta lenzuol cadente,
Col crin disciolto, con occhio ardente,
Qual densa nebbia dal vento mossa,
Avanza, ingrossa, immensa par.

Rodolfo
Ve la dipinge, ve la figura
La vostra cieca credulità.

Amina e Teresa
Ah! non è fola, non è paura:
Ciascun la vide: è verità.

Elvino
In verità!

Coro
Dovunque inoltra a passo lento,
Silenzio regna che fa spavento;
Non spira fiato, non move stelo;
Quasi per gelo il rio si sta.
I cani stessi accovacciati,
Abbassan gli occhi, non han latrati.
Sol tratto tratto da valle fonda
La Strige immonda urlando va.

Amina, Lisa, Teresa, Elvino e Rodolfo
E verità.

Coro
I cani stessi *ecc.*

Rodolfo
Vorrei vederla, o presto o tardi,
Vorrei vederla, scoprir che fa.

Lisa, Teresa, Amina ed Elvino
Il ciel vi guardi!
Saria soverchia temerità.

Rodolfo
Basta così. Ciascuno
Si attenga al suo parer. Verrà stagione
Che di siffatte larve
Fia purgato il villaggio.

Teresa
Il ciel lo voglia!
Questo, o signore, è universal desìo.

Rodolfo
Ma del viaggio mio
Riposarmi vorrei, se mel concede
La mia bella albergatrice.

Amina, Lisa, Teresa, Elvino, Alessio e Coro
Buon riposo, signor... Notte felice.

Rodolfo
Addio, gentil fanciulla;
Fino a domani addio... T'ami il tuo sposo
Come amarti io saprei.

Elvino *(con dispetto)*
Nessun mi vince
In professarle amore...

Rodolfo
Felice te se ne possedi il core!
(Parte con Lisa; il Coro si disperde.)

Scena settima
Elvino e Amina.

Amina
Elvino!... E me tu lasci
Senza un tenero addio?

Elvino *(con ironia)*
Dallo straniero
Ben tenero l'avesti.

Amina
È ver: commosso
In lasciarmi ei sembrò. Da quel sembiante
Ottimo cor traspare...

Elvino
E cor d'amante.

Amina
Parli tu il vero o scherzi?...
(con voce tremante)
Qual sorge dubbio in te?

Elvino
T'infingi invano.
Ei ti stringea la mano,
Ei ti facea carezze...

Amina
Ebben...

Elvino
Discare
Non t'eran esse, e ad ogni sua parola
S'incontravano i tuoi negli occhi suoi.

Amina *(con pena)*
Ingrato! e dir mel puoi?...
Occhi non ho né core
Fuor che per te. Non ti giurai mia fede?
Non ho l'anello tuo?

Elvino
Sì..

Amina
Non t'adoro?
Il mio ben non sei tu?

Elvino
Sì... ma...

Amina
Prosegui.
Saresti tu geloso?

Elvino
Ah! sì, lo sono...

Amina
Di chi?

Elvino
Di tutti.

Amina
Ingiusto cor!

Elvino
Perdono! Son geloso del zefiro errante
Che ti scherza col crine, col velo;
Fin del sol che ti mira dal cielo,
Fin del rivo che specchio ti fa.

Amina
Son, mio bene, del zefiro amante,
Perché ad esso il tuo nome confido;
Amo il sol' perché teco il divido,
Amo il rio, perché l'onda ti dà.

Elvino
Ah! perdona all'amore il sospetto!

Amina
Ah! per sempre sgombrarlo dei tu.

Elvino
Sì, per sempre.

Amina
E il prometti?

Elvino
Il prometto.

Amina
Mai più dubbi?

Elvino
Mai più dubbi.

Amina
Timori mai più?

Elvino
Timori mai più.

Amina ed Elvino
Ah! Mio bene!
Ah! costante nel tuo/mio seno
Sia la fede che amore avvalora!
E sembiante a mattino sereno
Per noi sempre la vita sarà.
Mio bene!
E sembiante *ecc.*
(Si allontanano.)

Amina
(sempre con crescente tenerezza)
Mio caro, addio!

Elvino
Mia cara, addio!
(Si avvicinano.)

Elvino
A me pensa.

Amina
E tu ancora.

Amina ed Elvino *(abbracciandosi)*
Pur nel sonno il mio cor ti vedrà.
Addio! Addio!
(Partono .)
Stanza nell'osteria. Di fronte una finestra: da un lato porta d'ingresso: dall'altro un gabinetto. Avvi un sofà e

un tavolino.

Scena ottava
Rodolfo, indi Lisa.

Rodolfo
Davver, non mi dispiace
D'essermi qui fermato: il luogo è ameno,
L'aria eccellente, gli uomini cortesi,
Amabili le donne oltre ogni cosa.
Quella giovine sposa
È assai leggiadra... E quella ostessa?
È un po' ritrosa, ma mi piace anch'essa.
Eccola: avanti, avanti,
Mia bella albergatrice.

Lisa
Ad informarmi
Veniva io stessa se l'appartamento
Va a genio al signor Conte.

Rodolfo
Al signor Conte!
(Diamine! son conosciuto!)

Lisa
Perdonate,
Ma il Sindaco lo accerta, e a farvi festa
Tutto il villaggio aduna.
Io ringrazio fortuna
Che a me prima di tutti ha conceduto
Il favor di offrirvi il mio rispetto.

Rodolfo
Nelle belle mi piace un altro affetto.
E tu sei bella, o Lisa,
Bella davvero...

Lisa
Oh! il signor Conte scherza.

Rodolfo
No, non ischerzo: e questi furbi occhietti
Quanti cori han sorpresi e ammaliati?

Lisa
No, non conosco finora innamorati.

Rodolfo
Tu menti, o bricconcella.
Io ne conosco...

Lisa *(avvicinandosi)*
Ed è?...

Rodolfo
Se quel foss'io,
Che diresti, o carina?

Lisa
Io... che direi?...
Signor... nol crederei.
In me non è beltà degna di tanto...
Un merito ho soltanto:
Quello di un cor sincero.

Rodolfo
E questo è molto
(Strepito alla finestra.)
Ma qual rumore ascolto?

Lisa
(Mal venga all'importuno!)

Rodolfo
Donde provien?

Lisa
Che non mi vegga alcuno.
(Fugge e nella fretta perde il fazzoletto; Rodolfo lo raccoglie e lo getta sul sofà.)

Scena nona.
Si spalanca la finestra. Comparisce Amina: è coperta di una semplice veste bianca. Ella dorme: è sonnambula; e s'avanza lentamente in mezzo alla stanza.

Rodolfo
Che veggio? Saria questo
Il notturno fantasma? Ah! non m'inganno...
Quest'è la villanella
Che dianzi agli occhi miei parve sì bella.

Amina
Elvino!... Elvino!...

Rodolfo
Dorme.

Amina
Non rispondi?

Rodolfo
È sonnambula.

Amina *(con sorriso scherzoso)*
Geloso
Saresti ancora dello straniero? Ah parla!...
Sei tu geloso?

Rodolfo
Deggio destarla?

Amina
(con pena)
Ingrato! a me t'appressa...
Amo te solo, il sai...

Rodolfo
Dèstisi.

Amina *(tenera)*
Prendi...
La man ti stendo... un bacio imprimi in essa,
Pegno di pace.

Rodolfo
Ah! non si dèsti... Alcun
A turbarmi non venga in tal momento.
(Rodolfo va a chiudere la finestra.)

Lisa *(dal gabinetto)*
Amina!... O traditrice!
(Parte non veduta. - L'aspetto di Amina mostrasi lieto.)

Rodolfo
(correndo ad Amina, si arresta)
Oh ciel!... che tento?

Amina
(sogna il momento della cerimonia)
Oh come lieto il popolo
Che al tempio ne fa scorta!

Rodolfo
In sogno ancor quell'anima
È nel suo bene assorta.

Amina
Ardon le sacre tede.

Rodolfo
Essa all'altar si crede!

Amina
Oh madre mia, m'aïta;
Non mi sostiene il pie'!

Rodolfo
No, non sarai tradita,
Alma gentil, da me.

Amina
Oh madre mia *ecc.*

Rodolfo
No, no, da me *ecc.*
(Amina sogna che il sacro ministro le domanda il giuramento d'amore. - Amina alza la destra.)

Amina
Cielo, al mio sposo io giuro
Eterna fede e amor!

Rodolfo
Giglio innocente e puro,
Conserva il tuo candor!

Amina
Elvino!... alfin sei mio!

Rodolfo
Fuggasi.

Amina
Elvino!... già tua son io.

Rodolfo
Ah se più resto, io sento
La mia virtù mancar.

Amina
Abbracciami. Oh! contento
Che non si può spiegar!
Elvino!... Abbracciami.
Alfin sei mio.
(Rodolfo va per uscire dalla porta: ode rumore di gente; parte per la finestra donde è venuta Amina, e la chiude. Ella, sempre dormendo, si corica sul sofà.)

Scena decima
Contadini d'ambo i sessi, Sindaci e Alessio.

Alessio e Coro *(di dentro)*
Osservate. L'uscio è aperto.
Senza strepito inoltriam.
Tutto tace: ei dorme certo.
Lo destiam, o nol destiam?
Perché no? ci vuol coraggio.
Presentarsi, o uscir di qua.
Dell'ossequio del villaggio
Malcontento ei non sarà.
(Si avvicinano.)
Avanziam. Ve' ve'! mirate,
A dormir colà s'e messo.
Appressiam.
(Si accorgono di Amina, e tornano indietro.)
Ah! fermate:
Non è desso, non è desso, no.
Al vestito, alla figura,
È una donna... donna, sì.
(reprimendo le risa)
È bizzarra l'avventura.
Una donna!
Come entrò? che mai fa qui?

Scena undicesima
Teresa, Elvino, Lisa e detti.

Elvino
(di dentro)
E menzogna.

Coro
Alcun s'appressa.

Lisa
(addita Amina)
Mira e credi agli occhi tuoi.

Elvino
Cielo! Amina!

Teresa e Coro
Amina! dessa!

Amina *(svegliandosi)*
Dove son?... chi siete voi?
(vedendo Elvino)
Ah! mio bene!
(Corre a lui.)

Elvino *(respingendola)*
Va'! traditrice!...

Amina
Io!!...

Elvino
Ti scosta.

Amina
Oh! me infelice!
Che feci io mai?

Elvino
E ancor lo chiedi?...

Alessio e Coro
Dove sei tu ben lo vedi.

Amina
Qui!... perché?... chi mi v'ha spinta?...

Elvino
(con rabbia concentrata)
Il tuo core ingannator.

Amina
(si getta nelle braccia della madre. - Teresa si copre il volto colle mani)
Madre! oh! madre!

Lisa e Coro
Ah! sei convinta!

Elvino
Va'! spergiura!...

Amina
Oh! me infelice! Che feci io mai?
Oh mio dolor!
D'un pensiero e d'un accento
Rea non son, né il fui giammai.
Ah! se fede in me non hai,
Mal rispondi a tanto amor.

Elvino
Voglia il cielo che il duol ch'io sento
Tu provar non debba mai!
Ah! tel mostri s'io t'amai
Questo pianto del mio cor.

Amina
Ah mel credi, ah! rea non sono *ecc.*

Teresa
Deh! l'udite!
Il rigor eccede omai.

Alessio e Coro
Il tuo nero tradimento
È palese e chiaro assai.
In qual cor fidar più mai,
Se quel cor fu mentitor?
(In questo frattempo, Teresa ha raccolto sul sofà il fazzoletto di Lisa, e lo ha posto al collo di Amina.)

Elvino
Non più nozze.

Alessio e Coro
Non più nozze.

Elvino
Sconoscente, io t'abbandono...

Amina
Oh! crudo istante!
Deh! m'udite! io rea non son.

Elvino
Togli a me la tua presenza:
La tua voce orror mi fa.

Amina
Nume amico all'innocenza,
Svela tu la verità.

Amina ed Elvino
Non è questa, ingrato core,
Non è questa la mercede
Ch'io sperai per tanto amore,
Che aspettai per tanta fede...
Ah! m'hai tolta in un momento
Ogni speme di contento...
Ah! penosa rimembranza
Sol di te mi resterà.

Lisa, Alessio e Coro
Non più nozze, non più imene:
Sprezzo, infamia a lei conviene.
Di noi tutti all'odio eterno,
Al rossor la rea vivrà.

Teresa
Ah! se alcun non ti sostiene,
Se favor nessun t'ottiene,
Sventurata, il sen materno
Chiuso a te non resterà.
(Tutti escono minacciando Amina: ella cade fra le braccia di Teresa.)

Atto secondo

Ombrosa Valletta fra il Villaggio e il Castello.

Scena prima
Coro di Contadini e Contadine.

Coro
Qui la selva è più folta ed ombrosa.
Qui posiamo vicini al ruscello.
Lunga ancora, scoscesa, sassosa
È la via che conduce al castello.
Sempre tempo per giungere avremo,
Pria che sorga dal letto il signore.
Riflettiam! Quando giunti saremo,
Che direm per toccare il suo cor?...
Eccellenza!... direm con coraggio...
Signor Conte... la povera Amina
Era dianzi l'onor del villaggio,
Il desìo d'ogni villa vicina,
D'ogni villa era dianzi l'onor.
Ad un tratto è trovata dormente
Nella stanza che voi ricettò...
Difendetela, s'ella è innocente,
Aiutatela, s'ella fallò.
A tai detti, a siffatti argomenti...
Ei si mostra commosso, convinto:
Noi preghiamo, insistiam riverenti...
Ei ci affida, ei promette, abbiam vinto...
Consolati al villaggio torniamo:
In due passi, in due salti siam qua.
Alla prova!... da bravi! partiamo...
La meschina protetta sarà.
(Partono.)

Scena seconda
Amina e Teresa.

Amina
Reggimi, o buona madre; a mio sostegno
Sola rimani tu.

Teresa
Fa' core. Il Conte
Dalle lagrime tue sarà commosso.
Andiamo.

Amina
Ah! no... non posso:
Il cor mi manca e il pie'. Vedi? Siam noi

Presso il poder d'Elvino. Oh! quante volte
Sedemmo insieme di questi faggi all'ombra,
Al mormorar del rio! L'aura che spira
Dei giuramenti nostri anco risuona...
Gli obliò quel crudele! ei m'abbandona!

Teresa
Esser non puote, il credi,
Ch'ei più non t'ami. Afflitto è forse anch'esso,
Afflitto al par di te... Miralo: ei viene
Solitario e pensoso...

Amina
A lui mi ascondi... rimaner non oso.

Scena terza
Elvino, e dette in disparte.

Amina
Vedi, o madre... è afflitto e mesto...
Forse... ah! forse m'ama ancor.

Elvino
Tutto è sciolto:
Più per me non v'ha conforto.
Il mio cor per sempre è morto
Alla gioia ed all'amor.

Amina
(si avvicina ad Elvino)
M'odi, Elvino...

Elvino
(si scuote)
Tu... e tant'osi?...

Amina
Deh!... ti calma ...

Elvino
Va'! spergiura!

Amina
Credi...
Colpa alcuna in me non è.

Elvino
Tu m'hai tolto ogni conforto.

Amina
Sono innocente. Io tel giuro:
Colpa alcuna in me non è.

Elvino
Va'... ingrata!
(amaramente)
Pasci il guardo e appaga l'alma
Dell'eccesso de' miei mali:
Il più triste de' mortali
Sono, o cruda, e il son per te.

Voci
Viva il Conte!

Elvino *(per uscire)*
Il Conte!

Amina
Ah! t'arresta.

Elvino
No: si fugga.

Amina
Per pietade!

Scena quarta
Coro e detti.

Elvino
Va'! mi lascia.

Coro
Buone nuove!
Dice il Conte ch'ella è onesta,
Che è innocente, e a noi già move.

Elvino
Egli! oh! rabbia!

Amina, Teresa e Coro
Ah! placa l'ira...

Elvino
L'ira mia più fren non ha.
(Le toglie l'anello.)

Amina
Ah! il mio anello... oh! madre!...
(Teresa sostiene Amina quasi spirante.)

Coro *(ad Elvino)*
Mira!... A tal colpo morirà. Crudel!

Elvino *(si presenta ad Amina vivamente commosso)*
Ah! perché non posso odiarti,
Infedel, com'io vorrei!
Ah! del tutto ancor non sei
Cancellata dal mio cor.
Possa un altro, ah! possa amarti
Qual t'amò quest'infelice!
Altro voto, o traditrice,
Non temer dal mio dolor.

Coro
Ah! crudel, pria di lasciarla,
Vedi il Conte, al Conte parla.
Ei di rendere è capace
A te pace, a lei l'onor.
Ei renderà a lei l'onor.

(Elvino parte disperato. - Teresa tragge seco Amina da un'altra parte.)
Villaggio come nell'Atto primo.
In fondo al Teatro si scorge il mulino di Teresa: un torrente ne fa girare la ruota.

Scena quinta
Lisa seguitata da Alessio.

Lisa
Lasciami: aver compreso
Assai dovresti che mi sei noioso.

Alessio
Non isperar che sposo
Elvin ti sia. Dell'onestà d'Amina
Sarà convinto in breve, e allora...

Lisa
E allora
Tu mi sarai più rincrescioso ancora.

Alessio
Deh! Lisa, per pietà... cambia consiglio,
Non mi trattar così. Che far d'un uomo
Che ti sposa soltanto per dispetto?

Lisa
Mi è più caro d'un sciocco, io te l'ho detto.

Alessio
No, non lo sposerai. Porrò sossopra
Tutto il villaggio: invocherò del Conte
L'autorità, pria ch'io sopporti in pace
D'esser da te schernito in questa guisa.

Coro ***(di dentro)***
Lisa è la sposa.
Lisa e Alessio
Che?...
Coro ***(di dentro)***
La sposa è Lisa.
(sortendo)
Lisa?

Scena sesta
Contadini, Contadine e detti.

Coro
A rallegrarci con te veniamo,
Di tua fortuna ci consoliamo.
A te fra poco, d'Amina in loco,
La man di sposo Elvin darà.

Lisa
De' lieti auguri a voi son grata,
Con gioia io veggo che son amata;
E la memoria del vostro amore
Giammai dal cor non m'uscirà.

Coro
La bella scelta a tutti è cara,
Ciascun ti loda, t'esalta a gara,
Ognun ti prega prosperità.

Alessio
(Qual uom da tuono colpito io sono:
Parole il labbro trovar non sa.)

Scena settima
Elvino e detti.

Lisa
E fia pur vero, Elvino,
Che alfin dell'amor tuo degna mi credi?

Elvino
Sì, Lisa. Si rinnovi
Il bel nodo di pria: l'averlo sciolto
Perdona a un cor sedotto
Da mentita virtù.

Lisa
Perdono tutto.
Ora che a me ritorni
Più non penso al passato: altro non veggo
Che il ridente avvenir che alfin mi aspetta.

Elvino
Vieni: tu, mia diletta,
Mia compagna sarai. La sacra pompa
Già nel tempio si appresta.
Non si ritardi.

Coro
Andiam.

Scena ottava
Rodolfo e detti.

Rodolfo
Elvino, t'arresta.

Lisa
(Il Conte!)

Alessio
(A tempo ei giunge.)

Rodolfo
Ove t'affretti?

Elvino
Al tempio.

Rodolfo
Odimi prima.
Degna d'amor, di stima
È Amina ancor: io della sua virtude,
Come de' pregi suoi,
Mallevador esser ti voglio.

Elvino
Voi!! Signor!...
Signor Conte, agli occhi miei
Negar fede non poss'io.

Rodolfo
Ingannato, illuso sei:
Io ne impegno l'onor mio.

Elvino
Nella stanza a voi serbata
Non la vidi addormentata?

Rodolfo
La vedesti, Amina ell'era...
Ma svegliata non v'entrò.

Lisa, Elvino e Coro
Come dunque? In qual maniera?

Rodolfo
Tutti udite.

Coro, Lisa ed Elvino
Udiamo un po'.

Rodolfo
V'han certuni che dormendo
Vanno intorno come dèsti,
Favellando, rispondendo

Come vengono richiesti,
E chiamati son sonnambuli
Dall'andar e dal dormir.

Lisa e Coro
E fia vero? e fia possibile?

Rodolfo
Un par mio non può mentir.

Elvino
No, non fia: di tai pretesti
La cagione appien si vede.

Rodolfo
Sciagurato! e tu potresti
Dubitar della mia fede?

Elvino *(senza badare a Rodolfo)*
Vieni, o Lisa.

Lisa
Andiam.

Elvino e Coro
Andiam.

Coro
A tai fole non crediamo.
Un che dorme e che cammina!
No, non è, non si può dar.

Scena nona
Teresa e detti.

Teresa
Piano, amici; non gridate;
Dorme alfin la stanca Amina:
Ne ha bisogno, poverina,
Dopo tanto lagrimar.

Lisa, Elvino e Coro
Sì, tacciamo, ah! sì, tacciam,
Tacciamo...

Teresa
Lisa! Elvino!... che vegg'io?
Dove andate in questa guisa?

Lisa
A sposarci.

Teresa
Voi! gran Dio!
E la sposa... è Lisa?...

Elvino
È Lisa.

Lisa
Sì, e lo merto: io non fui colta
Sola mai, di notte in volta;
Né trovata io fui rinchiusa
Nella stanza di un signor.

Teresa
Menzognera! a questa accusa
Più non freno il mio furor.
Questo vel fu rinvenuto
Nella stanza del signore.

Elvino e Coro
Di chi è mai?... chi l'ha perduto?

Teresa
(accennando Lisa)
Ve lo dica il suo rossore.
(Elvino lascia la mano di Lisa mortificato.)

Elvino e Coro
Lisa!

Teresa
Lisa. Il signor Conte
Mi smentisca se lo può.

Lisa
(Io non oso alzar la fronte!)

Rodolfo, Alessio e Coro
(Che pensar, che dir non so/sa.)

Elvino *(da sé)*
Lisa mendace anch'essa!
Rea dell'istesso errore!
Spento è nel mondo amore,
Più fe', più onor non v'ha.

Teresa *(da sé)*
In quella fronte impressa
Chiara è la colpa e certa.
Soffra: pietà non merta
Chi altrui negò pietà.

Lisa *(da sé)*
Cielo! a tal colpo oppressa,
Voce non trovo e tremo.
Quanto al mio scorno estremo
La mia rival godrà!

Rodolfo *(da sé)*
In quella fronte *ecc.*

Alessio e Coro
Ah che pensar non so...

Elvino
Signor?... che creder deggio?
Ella pur mi tradì!

Rodolfo
Quel ch'io ne pensi
Manifestar non vo'. Sol ti ripeto,
Sol ti sostengo, che innocente è Amina,
Che la stessa virtù offendi in essa.

Elvino
Chi fia che il provi?

Rodolfo
Chi? Mira: ella stessa.

Scena ultima
Amina sorte dalla finestra del mulino: è sonnambula. - Rodolfo nel voltarsi scorge Amina che sorte dalla finestra. - Tutti sbigottiti con grido soffocato:

Lisa, Teresa, Elvino, Alessio e Coro
Ah!

Rodolfo

Silenzio: un sol passo,
Un sol grido l'uccide.

Teresa
Oh figlia!

Elvino
Oh Amina!
(Tutti con voce repressa finché non si svegli Amina.)

Coro
Scende...

Lisa, Teresa, Elvino, Rodolfo, Alessio e Coro
Bontà divina,
Guida l'errante pie'!
(Amina giunge presso alla ruota camminando sopra una trave mezzo fracida che piega sotto di lei.)
Trema... vacilla...
(Si spezza la trave sotto il piede di Amina.)
Ahimè!...
(Grido soffocato di terrore. - Amina si rimette.)

Rodolfo
Coraggio... è salva!

Lisa, Teresa, Elvino, Alessio e Coro
È salva!...
(Amina si avanza in mezzo al palco. - Silenzio universa!e.)

Amina
Oh!... se una volta sola
Rivederlo io potessi, anzi che all'ara
Altra sposa ei guidasse!...

Rodolfo *(ad Elvino)*
Odi?

Teresa
A te pensa,
Parla di te.

Amina
Vana speranza!... Io sento
Suonar la sacra squilla... Al tempio ei move...
Ah! l'ho perduto... e pur... rea non son io.

Elvino, Rodolfo, Alessio e Coro
Tenero cor!

Amina
(inginocchiandosi)
Gran Dio,
Non mirar il mio pianto: io gliel perdono.
Quanto infelice io sono
Felice ei sia... Questa d'un cor che more
È l'ultima preghiera...
Ah sì... Questa *ecc.*

Coro
Oh detti! oh amore!

Amina
(si guarda la mano come cercando l'anello di Elvino)
L'anello mio... l'anello...
Ei me l'ha tolto... Ma non può rapirmi
L'immagin sua... Sculta... ella è qui, qui... nel petto.
(Si toglie dal seno i fiori ricevuti da Elvino.)
Né te d'eterno affetto
Tenero pegno, o fior... né te perdei...
Ancor ti bacio... ma... inaridito sei.
Ah! non credea mirarti
Sì presto estinto, o fiore;
Passasti al par d'amore,
Che un giorno sol durò.
(Piange sui fiori.)

Elvino
Io più non reggo.

Amina
Passasti al par d'amore...

Elvino
Più non reggo a tanto duolo.

Amina
Che un giorno sol durò.
Potria novel vigore
Il pianto mio recarti...
Ma ravvivar l'amore
Il pianto mio non può.
Ah non credea, *ecc.*

Elvino
No, più non reggo.

Amina
E s'egli
A me tornasse!... Oh! torna, Elvino.

Rodolfo *(ad Elvino)*
Seconda
Il suo pensier.

Amina
A me t'appressi? Oh gioia!
L'anello mio mi rechi?

Rodolfo *(ad Elvino)*
A lei lo rendi.
(Elvino rimette l'anello ad Amina.)

Amina
Ancor son tua: tu sempre mio...
M'abbraccia,
(Rodolfo fa avvicinare Teresa ad Amina.)
Tenera madre... io son felice appieno!
(Elvino è prostrato ai piedi di Amina, e Teresa l'abbraccia.)

Rodolfo
De' suoi diletti in seno
Ella si dèsti.

Coro
Viva Amina!
Viva ancor!

Amina *(svegliandosi)*
Oh! ciel! ...
Ove son io?... che veggo?...
(Si copre gli occhi.)
Ah! per pietà,
Non mi svegliate voi!

Elvino
(con gran passione incalzante)
No: tu non dormi...
Il tuo sposo, il tuo amante è a te
vicino.

Amina
(con pianto di contento)
Oh! gioia!... oh! gioia!... io ti ritrovo,
Elvino!

Teresa, Elvino, Rodolfo, Alessio e Coro
Vanne al tempio,
Innocente e a noi più cara,
Bella più del tuo soffrire,
Vieni al tempio e a pie' dell'ara
Incominci il tuo gioir.

Amina
Ah! non giunge uman pensiero
Al contento ond'io son piena:
A' miei sensi io credo appena;
Tu m'affida, o mio tesor.
Ah mi abbraccia, e sempre insieme
Sempre uniti in una speme,
Della terra in cui viviamo
Ci formiamo un ciel d'amor.

Tutti
Innocente, e a noi più cara *ecc.*

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La Sonnambula

By VINCENZO BELLINI

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Teresa	FIORENZA COSSOTTO
Amina	MARIA MENEGHINI CALLAS
Elvino	NICOLA MONTI
Lisa	GRETA RAPISARDI
Alessio	DINO MANTOVANI
A Notary	FRANCO RICCIARDI

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CHORUS OF LA PICCOLA SCALA

1st Sopranos: Liuba Bandini, Giancarla Fregoni, Liliana Galliera, Maria Gabaglio, Gina Ogier, Giulia Perico, Fulvia Silvestrini, Enrica Squarcia Giussani, Merita Spernazzati. *2nd Sopranos:* Claudia Costantini, Alba Ghisleni, Luisa Pedrotti. *Contraltos:* Amelia Benoldi, Loretta Piva, Gigliola Tabanelli. *1st Tenors:* Antonio Cressotti, Angelo Currarini, Giuseppe de Risi, Emilio Grandi, Bruno Ghidoni, Francesco Bordonali, Francesco Roncarolo, Amerigo Carpeggiani. *2nd Tenors:* Ruggero Orofino, Umberto Fichera, Aldo Bottoni, Attilio Manfrin. *Baritones:* Bruno Beretta, Costantino Arrobbio, Nereo Coiutti, Bruno Trabuio. *Basses:* Archimede Benfenati, Antonio Chiesa, Gino Fontarelli, Giuseppe Moietta.

[Programme continued overleaf

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SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1—The Village Green

Scene 2—A Room in the Inn

Interval

ACT II

Scene 1—A Wood Outside the Village

Scene 2—The Village near Teresa's Mill

ORCHESTRA OF LA PICCOLA SCALA

Leader: ENRICO MINETTI

1st *Violins:* Enrico Minetti, Mario Gorrieri, Flavio Bonzo, Vittorio Enrini, Giovanni Braghiroli, Alfredo Codevilla, Mariano Frigo, Edgardo Macchinizzi, Vitaliano Corradi, Bruno Salvi. *2nd Violins:* Giuseppe Gambetti, Ferrucio de Poli, Ernesto Doimo, Bruno Macchiavelli, Michele Seccia Pesce, Vittorio Griggio, Gino Govi, Giacinto Auciello. *Violas:* Walter Rugalli, Marcello Turio, Armando Burattin, Aurelio Rossi, Renato Romanò, Alcide Carpana. *Cellos:* Mario Gusella, Gino Miglioli, Umberto Galli, Walter Caletti. *Double Basses:* Francesco Forgione, Luigi Grammatica, Luigi del Carmine. *Flute:* Glauco Cambursano. *Piccolo:* Giuseppe Rocca. *Oboes:* Michele Visai, Alfredo Panciroli. *Clarinets:* Mario Moretti, Orlando Jannelli. *Bassoons:* Mario Cazzola, Oreste Canfora. *Horns:* Michele Berrino, Alberto Moretti, Michelangelo Moioli, Adolfo Strappo. *Trumpets:* Alvaro Persenico, Antonio Palianti. *Trombones:* Ernesto Valesi, Luciano Parola, Guglielmo Chiapparini. *Harp:* Maria Oliva. *Harpsichord:* Elio Cantamessa. *Timpani:* Luigi Torrebruno. *Percussion:* Augusto Bergami, Antonio Buonocore.

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[*Programme continued on opposite page*

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[*Programme continued overleaf*

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LA PICCOLA SCALA

La Piccola Scala was opened on 26th December 1955 with *The Secret Marriage*. Its company has since performed a wide repertory ranging from Monteverdi's *Orpheus* to Strawinsky's *The Soldier's Tale* and entirely new works, and has paid visits to Vienna and to Johannesburg.

Dr. Antonio Ghiringhelli, general director of La Scala, has described La Piccola Scala as "the continuation of La Scala—La Scala's daughter". In physical terms, it is a small theatre standing beside the larger one. Artistically it is an organisation designed to extend and supplement the activities of its parent company, which works under the same management.

La Piccola Scala is not something improvised, but long meditated. Shortly after La Scala was rebuilt after its wartime destruction, its director had the idea of constructing a new building in Via dei Filodrammatici, which flanks the theatre. In the first place, this new construction was needed to house various activities of La Scala, to decentralise the work of preparing operas, to free the stage itself and to provide in the "outskirts" of the theatre rehearsal rooms for the ballet, the chorus, principal singers and the orchestra. Subsequently, the orchestral rehearsal room was thought of as a suitable auditorium for recording sessions. And from this idea it was only a step, first to conceiving of it as a concert hall, and finally as a proper theatre.

In this gradual and logical evolution of the original idea, a major part was played by the ever broader and more organic view of La Scala's tasks and the problems arising from them. It would be a mistake to suppose that La Scala's function is merely that of a "machine" designed to "produce", or rather reproduce, a certain amount of music every year, in concerts or opera performances. It must create and strengthen the conditions that will assure its continuing presence.

Thus the guiding principles of La Piccola Scala are implicit. And it is logical to think of it as a perfect place to perform operas and ballets conceived for smaller vocal and instrumental ensembles, not to mention chamber music itself.

The orchestra pit can hold 40–45 musicians—a chamber orchestra in other words. The proscenium measures approximately 23 feet in width by 16 feet in height. The stage itself, which is next to and communicates with that of La Scala, measures about 34 feet by 49 feet. It has the most modern mechanical apparatus and has a basement where the artists' dressing-rooms are situated. A completely modern lighting system, electronically regulated, makes any kind of scenic effect possible. The theatre also has a special control-room for recording sessions and has its own air-conditioning system.

Il Matrimonio Segreto is a production direct from the stage of La Piccola Scala. The remaining operas normally given at La Scala, have been transferred to the repertory of La Piccola Scala for the Edinburgh Festival performances.

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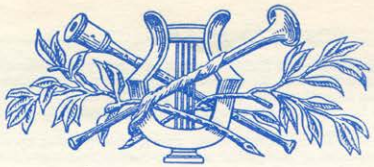
MONDAY, 26th AUGUST 1957

There will be an additional 20-minute interval at the end of Act 1, Scene 1, owing to the fact that tonight's performance is being broadcast.

TUESDAY, 3rd SEPTEMBER 1957

As has already been announced, Signora Maria Meneghini Callas has been released from her engagement with La Piccola Scala owing to ill-health.

The role of Amina will be sung to-night by Signora Renata Scotto.



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LA PICCOLA SCALA

presents

La Sonnambula

By VINCENZO BELLINI

KING'S THEATRE · 1957

VINCENZO BELLINI (1801-1835)

Of the three composers who dominated Italian opera in the early part of the nineteenth century, Bellini was the youngest. Unlike Rossini and Donizetti, he was essentially of a serious temperament; he seems to have had no taste for comedy, and devoted himself entirely to tragedy and melodrama. With three at least of his ten operas he achieved enormous fame in his day, and died tragically of consumption after a life almost exactly two years shorter than Mozart's.

Bellini has often been quoted as an example of the casual, tune-spinning operatic composer. This is most unfair; of all Italian opera composers of this period Bellini probably took more trouble over his work than any other. He resolutely refused to write more than one opera a year " so that I may put into it all I have to give". He started work on each new libretto with a close study of the characters, in order to " become as they are, speak as they speak", and he always declaimed the lines aloud to make sure of obtaining the right accents and the right inflections. He was certainly not a learned composer, but neither did he wish to be. If he avoided elaborate orchestral accompaniments he did so deliberately—for to Bellini the melody itself was the drama. And for his particular purpose he developed an individual melodic style, passionately romantic in character, which is not only deeply moving in itself, but incalculable in its influence upon the music of the nineteenth century.

La Sonnambula was the first of Bellini's great operas. Although it was written before *Norma* and *Puritani*, it is still regarded by many as his masterpiece: its idyllic theme is ideally suited to his gentle, melancholy genius. It was first performed at Milan in March 1831, and in London a few months later. In this work Malibran, Patti and Albani successively made their débuts in this country, and it remained one of the most popular operas in the London repertory until its last performance in 1910.

La Sonnambula

ACT I

SCENE I *The Village Green*

The villagers are preparing to celebrate the betrothal of Amina and Elvino, and sounds of merry-making are heard. But Lisa (the proprietress of the village inn) takes no part in these rejoicings, for she loves Elvino herself and contemplates his approaching marriage with jealous despair. The villagers troop into the square. With them comes Alessio, who is in love with Lisa; his present attentions, however, only accentuate her distress.

Amina enters with her foster-mother, Teresa, and, after thanking the neighbours for their good wishes, sings rapturously of her happiness on this day. But her confident anticipation of the same happiness for Alessio is ill received by Lisa. A notary arrives, followed by the bridegroom: with tender vows Elvino places the ring on Amina's finger, and the betrothal ceremony is concluded to the satisfaction of all—except, of course, Lisa.

There is a sound of horses, and a handsome stranger suddenly appears in the square. He is a traveller on his way to the nearby castle, but since night is approaching, he is persuaded to break his journey at the village inn. To everyone's surprise he seems to recognise his surroundings; after musing for a while upon his youthful memories of the village, he enquires the reason for the present festivities and promptly addresses himself to Amina with extravagant gallantry.

Teresa now announces the end of the proceedings, reminding the company of the mysterious phantom which haunts the village at about this hour. In spite of the earnest assurances of the whole assembly, the stranger scoffs light-heartedly at this naïve superstition and, bidding Amina an amorous good-night, he follows Lisa into the inn. As the villagers disperse, Elvino reproaches his bride for taking too much pleasure in the stranger's gallant speeches, but her protestations of affection soon restore his peace of mind.

SCENE II *A Room in the Inn*

The stranger is meditating the rival attractions of Lisa and Amina when Lisa enters to make sure that her guest is comfortable. She tells him that his identity has been discovered: he is in fact Rodolfo, the young lord of the castle, who has returned home after many years' absence—and the villagers are even now making preparations for a suitable welcome. Though not best pleased at this revelation, Rodolfo determines to find consolation in Lisa's charms. But a sound at the window checks him, and Lisa, fearful for her reputation, rushes from the room. In leaving, she drops her handkerchief, which Rodolfo retrieves and throws on the bed.

The window is opened from outside and Amina steps into the room. She is clothed in white, and Rodolfo quickly realises that she is sleep-walking. She is evidently still worried by Elvino's recent jealousy, and dreams, as she walks, of the wedding that is to take place in church next day. For a moment Rodolfo is tempted to take amorous advantage of her presence in his room, but he is moved by her innocence and the sincerity of her love for Elvino; he steps quietly out of the window and Amina, still asleep, lies down on the bed.

The villagers now arrive in force to welcome Rodolfo. Thinking him to be asleep they creep quietly into the darkened room and are surprised and amused to find a woman on the bed. They are about to retire discreetly when suddenly Elvino appears: Lisa, who has overheard Amina's voice in the room and jumped to the obvious conclusion, has lost no time in fetching the young man to witness a scene so clearly to her advantage.

The interruption wakens Amina. She is bewildered by her situation and Elvino, taking her confusion for evidence of guilt, furiously accuses her of infidelity. She turns with a pathetic protest of innocence to her foster-mother, who comforts her and, picking up Lisa's handkerchief from the bed, places it gently round Amina's shoulders. But Elvino will not be placated and disowns his bride.

ACT II

SCENE I *A Wood outside the Village*

The villagers are on their way to the castle, to ask Rodolfo to intercede on Amina's behalf. Amina, following with her foster-mother, meets Elvino; he is in a bitter mood and will not listen to her appeals. The villagers return, having obtained a promise of help from Rodolfo—but the mention of that name only increases Elvino's fury. Seizing Amina's hand, he wrenches the betrothal ring from her finger. And yet he reflects that, unfaithful though she is, he cannot truly hate her.

SCENE II *The Village near Teresa's Mill*

Lisa, making the most of her chances, has already extracted from Elvino his promise to marry her. In spite of Alessio's protests, she receives the congratulations of the villagers with complacency and, when Elvino enters, prepares to accompany him at once to church. But Rodolfo intercepts them: warning Elvino that he is about to make a grievous mistake, he swears that Amina is innocent. He explains to the assembled company that Amina is a sleep-walker; but Elvino, who has never heard of somnambulism, refuses to believe so unlikely a story.

Meanwhile Amina, exhausted by her sufferings, is asleep in the mill nearby, and Teresa enters begging the villagers to lower their voices. She is horrified to discover Elvino's present intention, and at once produces the handkerchief which Lisa had dropped in Rodolfo's room. Elvino is appalled by this apparent evidence that Lisa, too, has betrayed him.

Once more Rodolfo testifies to Amina's innocence. For proof, he points suddenly towards the mill. From a window Amina appears. She is sleep-walking. Scarcely daring to breathe, the villagers watch as she steps on to the frail bridge that spans the racing millstream. A rotten plank gives under her foot, but she recovers herself and, crossing in safety, approaches the dazed assembly.

Elvino is convinced at last, and kneels before the sleep-walker, who mourns in her dreams over the flowers Elvino had given her the day before. Still sleeping, she pleads with him to give her back her ring and, Elvino, placing it on her finger, at last awakens her. Amina's sorrow is turned to joy and the villagers join their voices to the ecstatic happiness of the reunited pair.

Notes and synopsis by MICHAEL ROSE (*author's copyright*)

l'ELISIR d'AMORE
DONIZETTI
Nemorino GIUSEPPE DI STEFANO Tenor
Adina - - - HILDE GUEDEN Soprano
Belcore - - - RENATO CAPECCHI Bass
Dulcamara - FERNANDO CORENA Bass
Giannetta - LUISA MANDELLI Soprano
with The Chorus and Orchestra of the
Maggio Musicale Fiorentino conducted by
FRANCESCO MOLINARI PRADELLI
complete on three Decca long playing ffrr records
LXT 5155-7
The complete Decca-group catalogues and supplements to date give full details of many other magnificent recordings of Italian opera. GIUSEPPE DI STEFANO and FERNANDO CORENA—appearing during this festival in parts which they have sung for Decca—are among the world-famous artists featured on such records.
GIANANDREA GAVAZZENI —also appearing at Edinburgh this year—has begun to conduct for Decca. He has so far made ORCHESTRAL HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE OPERAS (LXT 5288), and conducted operatic recitals by Anita Cerquetti (LXT 5289) and Virginia Zeani (LXT 5317). Details of subsequent issues will be given in appropriate Decca supplements.
For most Decca complete opera recordings there are published libretti giving the original text side-by-side with a line-for-line literal English prose translation. The libretto for l'Elisir d'Amore costs 4/- and is obtainable from dealers. Decca has also produced THE DECCA BOOK OF OPERA. This gives biographical information about singers and conductors, descriptions by specialist writers of 164 operatic works and a comprehensive Decca operatic discography. Obtainable from booksellers or direct from us: standard edition 40/-; de luxe edition 60/-.
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Newspaper Reviews

By courtesy of Winfried Stiffel

The Scotsman *(August 20, 1957)*

The Times *(August 20, 1957)*

The Daily Telegraph *(August 20, 1957)*

The Sunday Times *(August 25, 1957)*

(Note you can zoom in the reproductions to get a close-up view)

TRIUMPHAL DEBUT OF PICCOLA SCALA IN LA SONNAMBULA

Superb performance by Maria Callas

LA PICCOLA SCALA
Callas in "La Sonnambula"

Count Rodolfo ... NICOLA ZACCARIA
Teresa ..... FIORENZA COSSOTTO
Amina ... MARIA MENEGHINI CALLAS
Elvino ..... NICOLA MONTI
Lisa ..... GRETA RAPISARDI
Conductor, ANTONINO VOTTO
Producer, LUCHINO VISCONTI

By CHRISTOPHER GRIER

Bellini's "Norma" was recently revived at Covent Garden, and last night his "Sonnambula" was presented by the Piccola Scala, in the King's Theatre, Edinburgh. In both cases, the inspiration was Maria Meneghini Callas, who inflamed the smart first-night audience to a fever of enthusiasm without parallel in the Festival's operatic annals. In the first act, the applause was such that a voice was raised in protest, "reserve your applause . . ." but the conductor, Antonio Votto, oblivious to this advice, started up again so that we never heard the end of the sentence.

Elsewhere, Madame Callas would have been pelted with flowers during the tumultuous final curtain calls, but Edinburgh, ill-trained in such matters, had come unprepared. But if it was a personal triumph for the prima donna as a very great actress and a most remarkable singer, it was also a belated recognition of Bellini himself, a composer neglected in Britain though not in Italy. Yesterday's production has in fact been running in Milan for some time now.

Furnished with an entrancingly silly and sentimental plot, "La Sonnambula" is about as operatic as any opera can decently be. It just gets away with it. Amina's disconcerting habit of sleep walking was bound to compromise her sooner or later, and being operatic, she was bound to have chosen her betrothal day to have glided into the colossal bedroom of Count Rodolfo at the village inn. Needless to say, the

Maria Meneghini Callas

whole village finds her there and are as unwilling to believe her story as is her fiancé, Elvino. However, her somnambulistic ability to cross a notoriously rickety bridge over a mill stream in full view of the whole community puts her right morally and restores her eventually to the arms of her former fiancé.

If the handsome and licentious count is a stock character, so are the others, the scheming ex-girl friend of Elvino, and even the Amina's foster-mother—all caught up in stock situations of flirtatiousness, jealousy and general emotional mayhem; and yet they hold the stage a good deal more convincingly than many more complicated figures in music-drama, realismo or what you will.

Like Amina herself, they all walk the plank of bathos, but are miraculously preserved. Bellini believed in them and gave them glorious tunes to prove it. Time and again there is a thud in the bass, a repeated arpeggio figure in the lower strings, and everybody settles back while hero or heroine or both embark on a limpid flood of melody.

Faced with the problem of putting across this sort of thing, the producer, Visconti had evidently decided on stylisation rather than realism. He was justifiably trusting to the voices and personalities of the main singers to carry the action. Against defiantly old-fashioned and slightly tatty sets, and 1860th costumes, he arranged a series of tableaux, like a great grandmother's picture book or old operatic and ballet prints. The chorus was static, always prompt to take up a half-moon formation while the main characters were ranged across the front or within kicking distance of the prompt box. It seemed to me a mistake however to arrange for Aminas first entrance down that very same bridge which was later to be so dangerous. Yet how else could she have made her first entrance without getting submerged in the crowd? The lighting, too, was odd, though that may have been first-night nerves on the part of the electricians. For all of Anima's dream sequence just before the end, which was sung with wonderful pathos, and superb mezza voce control, the stage was suddenly plunged into deep gloom. As if to underline the implications of her words, her grave was then trundled on for her to sit on.

Exciting and moving as Madame Callas's performance was, she did not swamp her colleagues, and the cast was very strong. With a complete absence of unnecessary movement or gesture, each character was complete in its own context, even Lisa, who had little else to do but to look sour after her opening aria. I can only urge any who have not been able to get tickets for future performances of "Sonnambula" to beg, borrow or even steal them. They will be rewarded with a feast of singing.

The Scotsman
August 20, 1957

THE TIMES TUESDAY AUGUST 20 1957

Piccola Scala at Festival

La Sonnambula

Count Rodolfo .... NICOLA ZACCARIA
Teresa ..... FIORENZA COSSOTTO
Amina .... MARIA MENEGHINI CALLAS
Elvino ..... NICOLA MONTI
Lisa ..... EDITH MARTELLI
Alessio ..... DINO MANTOVANI
Notary ..... FRANCO RICCIARDI
Producer: LUCHINO VISCONTI
Conductor: ANTONINO VOTTO

FROM OUR MUSIC CRITIC

EDINBURGH, AUG. 19

The opera at the Edinburgh Festival this year has been commissioned from La Piccola Scala, a new department of the great Milan Opera House. Its actual auditorium has been roundly condemned, the conventions of Italian opera being what they are, by Mr. Vincent Sheean in his recent musical autobiography. But the intention behind its establishment was sound enough—to get back for the appropriate operas to the style of singing as it was before the heroics of Verdi and the vulgarisms of Puccini, as presented on big stages, had induced in Italian singers the habit of yelling their notes, a habit encouraged by the Italian attitude to opera as a form of sport rather than art.

A century ago Chorley, whose ideal of Italian opera was Bellini and Donizetti, declared that if Signor Verdi continued to write operas there would not in 10 years be a voice left in all Italy. He was wrong in fact but right in essence. It was therefore a matter of the highest interest to see and hear what one of the old Italian operas, that has faded from most other stages in the world, would turn out to be like.

La Sonnambula is a silly opera, musically jejune, dramatically impotent, but it contains a famous soprano role that was once Jenny Lind's favourite. The main feature of to-night's performance, apart from the general historical and stylistic questions involved, was naturally the performance of Miss Maria Callas. Being a Greek, Miss Callas is the possessor of a naturally brilliant voice, which can fill a house of any size whereas the part of Amina really calls for sweetness and delicacy as well as *fioriture*, pearls in fact rather than diamonds. It says something for the Piccola experiment that both she and her partner, Mr. Nicola Monti, for the most part sang with the gentleness appropriate to Bellini's *cantilena*—there was more of agreeable *mezza voce* than of all-out Italian bravura.

These two parts are what have kept the opera in suspended animation, and they were sung with the requisite skill. But even in a silly opera we in operatically benighted Britain look for some sort of attempt to present it as a music-drama. The Italian producer must not be held accountable for the eccentricities of the lighting perpetrated by the notorious switchboard at the King's Theatre, but the chorus, which plays quite an important part, was aimless in its movements and the rotten plank broke after the sleepwalker had passed the danger point.

The conductor never attempted to get any real variation of pace, which is, of course, mainly the composer's fault, for his control was so lax that there was neither precision nor character in the orchestral playing. The secondary roles were well filled. In particular Mr. Nicola Zaccaria as the Count was sonorous, authoritative, and stylish. But the performance was on the whole a demonstration of what gave opera a bad name for absurdity. As such it was a lesson in musical history and a demonstration of florid singing, but a dim entertainment.

The Times
August 20, 1957

MARIA CALLAS CAPTIVATING IN "SONNAMBULA"

PICCOLA SCALA

From MARTIN COOPER

EDINBURGH, Monday.

The operatic side of this year's Edinburgh Festival has been entrusted to the Piccola Scala Company from Milan, which opened with Bellini's "La Sonnambula" at the King's Theatre to-night.

This more than unusually incredible story is one of true love in a Swiss village, crossed by a wicked Count (whose Don Juanesque proclivities are checked by admirable Swiss principles) and finally triumphant owing to the bride's sleepwalking habits, which had previously landed her in serious trouble.

The work is a nightingales' paradepiece, largely deficient in any but melodic interest of a narrowly restricted order and often tedious for this reason.

ELEGIAC MELODY

It is at least partly redeemed, however, by its wealth of elegiac melodies, a single ensemble at the end of Act 1 and the excitement of pure vocal acrobatics.

All depends on the two protagonists and since Maria Meneghini Callas was singing Amina, the expectations of the house were high.

Amina is all tenderness and vulnerable innocence, and none but the sweetest, most limpid tones should escape her until her final air of triumph. This is not the natural character of Mme. Callas's voice nor these the distinguishing marks of her art; rather the contrary.

But she is a good actress. Though her tone above mezzo-forte is often painfully hard, her repertory of vocal colour restricted, and her unaccompanied piano singing not always steady, she captivated the audience by the agility of her florid singing and the strength of her personality, released in its natural form in the final brilliant "Ah! Non giunge."

PURE LYRICAL TONE

Nicola Monti was far more naturally gifted for the part of Elvino. His firm line and pure lyrical tone were consistently admirable at all dynamic levels.

Nicola Zaccaria's Count Rodolfo was warm in tone though not particularly distinguished in phrasing but Fiorenza Cossotto showed both character and art in the small part of Teresa.

Under Antonino Votto the orchestra of the Piccola Scala improved after a shaky start, but the extraordinary vagaries of the lighting must have handicapped the singers as it puzzled the audience.

Luchino Visconti's production made the most of Romani's poor libretto, and Piero Tosi's Switzerland was pretty enough except for the Count's hotel bedroom, which no Swiss hotelier could have allowed.

The Daily Telegraph
August 20, 1957

MUSIC

By FELIX APRAHAMIAN

VISITORS FROM MILAN

FESTIVAL enterprise and the spirit of adventure seem concentrated at Edinburgh this year in the Assembly Hall production of Johathan Griffin's "The Hidden King" rather than in the music-making. Most of the orchestral programmes have a familiar ring—they even include one all-Beethoven and one all-Tchaikovsky scheme—and none of the solo artists is an unknown quantity.

Inevitably attention has been focused on the operatic visitors from Milan at the King's Theatre. Anyone who has witnessed them on their own stage of the Piccola Scala, that delightful recent annexe to La Scala where the smaller-scale operas are given, will have realised that the opening performance of Bellini's "La Sonnambula" was a crude approximation to the quality which obtains at home, and more in the nature of a final rehearsal of a work as yet unfamiliar to the technicians of the company.

The revival of "La Sonnambula" (in which Jenny Lind once captivated her audiences) provides scope for Maria Callas in the vocal agility of the title rôle, and although this remarkable singer is better suited to more majestic and tragic parts than that of the little Swiss miss whose unfortunate sleep-walking propensities almost ruin her chances of marriage, she proves equal to it. Far more impressive than the intrinsic timbre of Madame Callas's voice, or the brilliant *fiorituri* of which she is sometimes mistress, are the melting *portamenti* and the lovely turn of melodic phrase that often inform her singing.

For sheer beauty of vocal tone, Fiorenza Cossotto, the Teresa, had no rival on the stage. Nicola Monti, the Elvino, deployed his sweetly pleasing voice with skill in the accommodating keys into which the tenor music had been transposed. The rôle of the feckless Count Rodolfo failed to make Nicola Zaccaria sound any less austerely noble than the priestly parts which are his best.

The conductor, Antonino Votto, and orchestra were unobtrusively adequate, but the exigencies of the King's Theatre aided the period production only too well in recapturing hazards unknown even in Jenny Lind's day: dimmers that whirred, lighting that trilled, spots that woobled, and carbon arcs that whistled throughout the second act a pedal point two octaves above Madame Callas's highest notes. At times it seemed that the Marx Brothers had been let loose on a switchboard.

◆ ◆ ◆

AFTER the protracted cheering inspired by the *diva* had died down, the shortcomings of the theatre rather than the musical enchantments of Bellini impinged upon the memory. Edinburgh must now erect an opera house worthy of the Festival. Much is made of its £20.000 loss and little is heard of the £3 million which the Festival brings into the city. There is a parallel in the prominence of Scots engineers and architects and the contrasting reticence which surrounds Scots bankers and financiers, who must be almost as numerous. Clearly the time has come for some co-ordination between them and the City Fathers.

The Piccola Scala company's second opera, Cimarosa's gay and tuneful "Il Matrimonio Segreto," fared better; it has been a repertory piece in Milan for two seasons and the strong cast with Ratti, Sciutti, Carturan, Alva, Calabrese and Badioli sparkles in performance under Nino Sanzogno.

Maestro Sanzogno's watch-like precision in ensembles and extraordinary flexibility in accompaniment were again displayed in the third opera, Donizetti's "L'Elisir d'Amore." This was the occasion for the first British stage appearance of Giuseppe di Stefano, one of La Scala's current idols. Operatic tenors rarely find the role of the gormless Nemorino histrionically difficult; di Stefano added an endearing Buster Keatonish quality to it as well as a pleasing voice. There was finely expressive singing from the Adina of Rosanna Carteri and a rollicking characterisation of the quack Dulcamara, with less singing, from Fernando Corena.

The morning concerts at the Freemasons' Hall maintain one of the Festival's happiest features. Early Scottish music is either tamer than might have been suspected or the highly finished ensemble of the Saltire Singers smoothed out any native roughness. The highlight here has been the memorable performance of Bach's unaccompanied 'cello suites by Janos Starker.

The Sunday Times
August 25, 1957

La Sonnambula Photo Gallery

By courtesy of *Winfried Stiffel, Frank Abe, Cosimo Capanni* and *Fabio Gervasoni*

On stage

After the performance

With the mayor of Edinburgh

At Stirling Castle

At Linlithgow Palace

Dinner

Press conference

At Albany Restaurant

Photo: Erio Piccagliani
Courtesy of Winfried Stiffel

Photo: Erio Piccagliani
Courtesy of Frank Abe

Photo: Erio Piccagliani
Courtesy of Frank Abe

Photo: Erio Piccagliani
Courtesy of Winfried Stiffel

Photo: Erio Piccagliani
Courtesy of Frank Abe

Photo: Erio Piccagliani
Courtesy of Winfried Stiffel

Amina (Maria Callas) and Teresa (Fiorenza Cossotto)
Photo: Erio Piccagliani - Courtesy of Winfried Stiffel

Count Rodolfo (Nicola Zaccaria), Lisa (Edith Martelli), Elvino (Nicola Monti),
Amina (Maria Callas), Antonino Votto, and Teresa (Fiorenza Cossotto)
Photo: Erio Piccagliani - Courtesy of Winfried Stiffel

Amina (Maria Callas), Count Rodolfo (Nicola Zaccaria),
Antonino Votto, Elvino (Nicola Monti), and Mrs. Votto
Photo: Erio Piccagliani - Courtesy of Winfried Stiffel

Amina (Maria Callas), Count Rodolfo (Nicola Zaccaria), Antonino Votto,
Elvino (Nicola Monti), Teresa (Fiorenza Cossotto) and Mrs. Votto
Photo: Erio Piccagliani - Courtesy of Winfried Stiffel

Robert Ponsonby, Mrs. Ponsonby and Maria Callas
Photo: Erio Piccagliani - Courtesy of Winfried Stiffel

Robert Ponsonby, Mrs. Ponsonby and Maria Callas
Photo: Erio Piccagliani - Courtesy of Fabio Gervasoni

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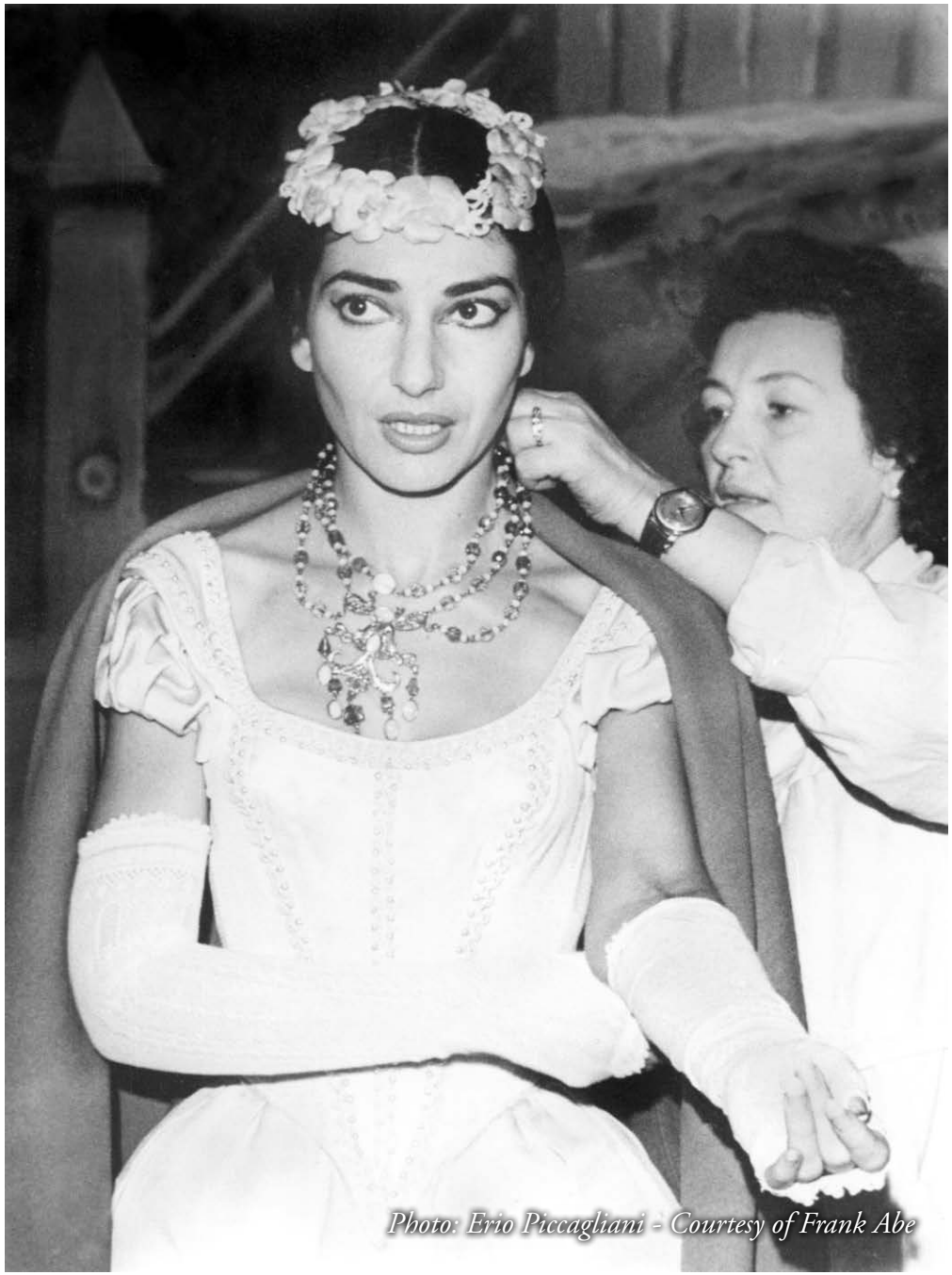
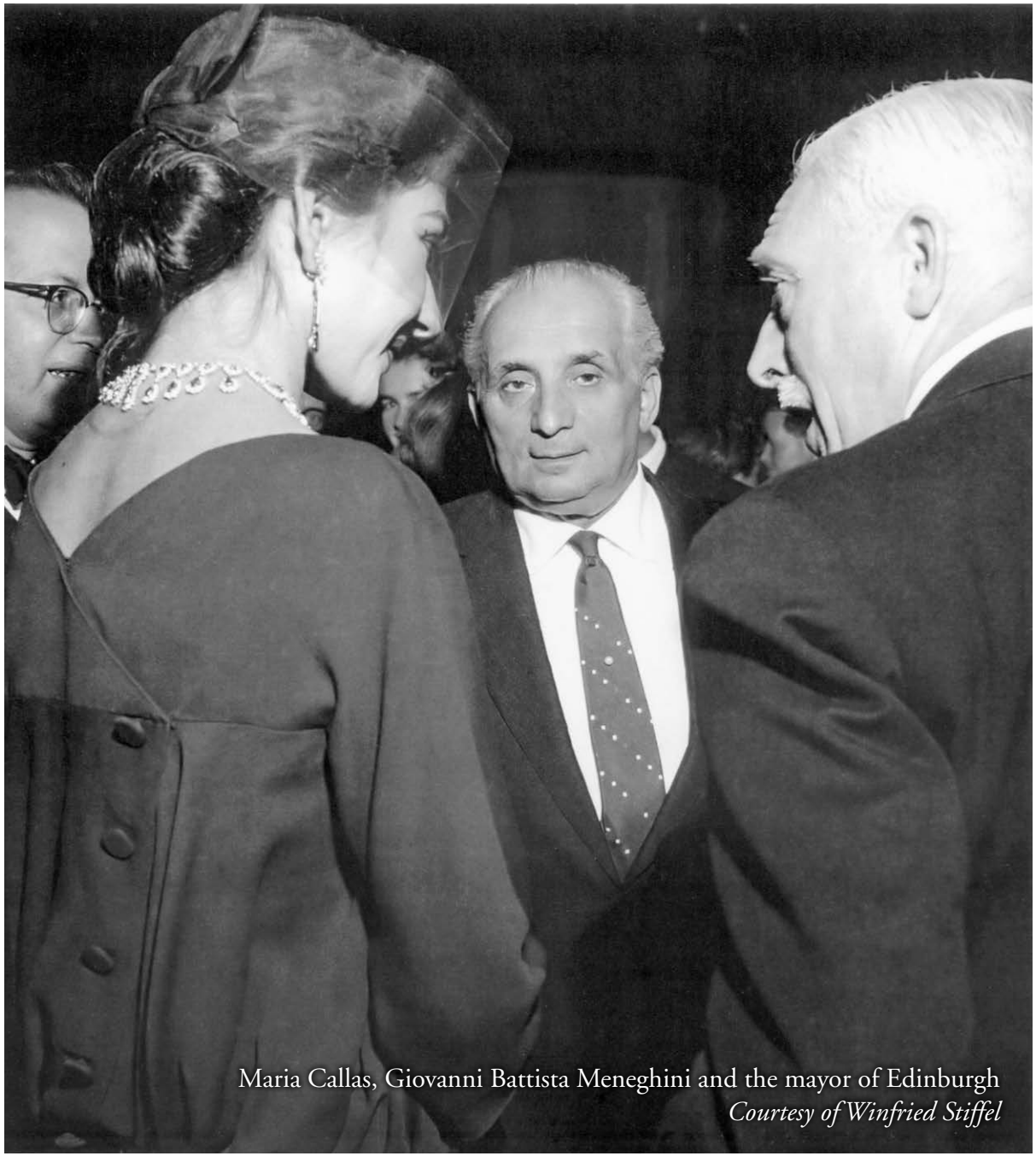


Photo: Erio Piccagliani - Courtesy of Frank Abe

Photo: Erio Piccagliani - Courtesy of Frank Abe

Photo: Erio Piccagliani - Courtesy of Fabio Gervasoni

Giovanni Battista Meneghini, Maria Callas, the mayor of Edinburgh, and Sir John Barbirolli
Courtesy of Winfried Stiffel



Maria Callas, Giovanni Battista Meneghini and the mayor of Edinburgh
Courtesy of Winfried Stiffel

Courtesy of Frank Abe

Maria Callas and Giuseppe di Stefano at Stirling Castle
Courtesy of Winfried Stiffel

Maria Callas at Stirling Castle
Courtesy of Cosimo Capanni

Maria Callas, Giuseppe di Stefano and Antonino Votto's wife at Stirling Castle
Courtesy of Cosimo Capanni

Maria Callas, Giuseppe di Stefano and Antonino Votto's wife at Stirling Castle
Courtesy of Cosimo Capanni

Maria Callas at Stirling Castle
Courtesy of Winfried Stiffel

Giuseppe di Stefano and Maria Callas at Stirling Castle
Courtesy of Winfried Stiffel

Maria Callas at Linlithgow Palace
Courtesy of Cosimo Capanni

Maria Callas at Linlithgow Palace
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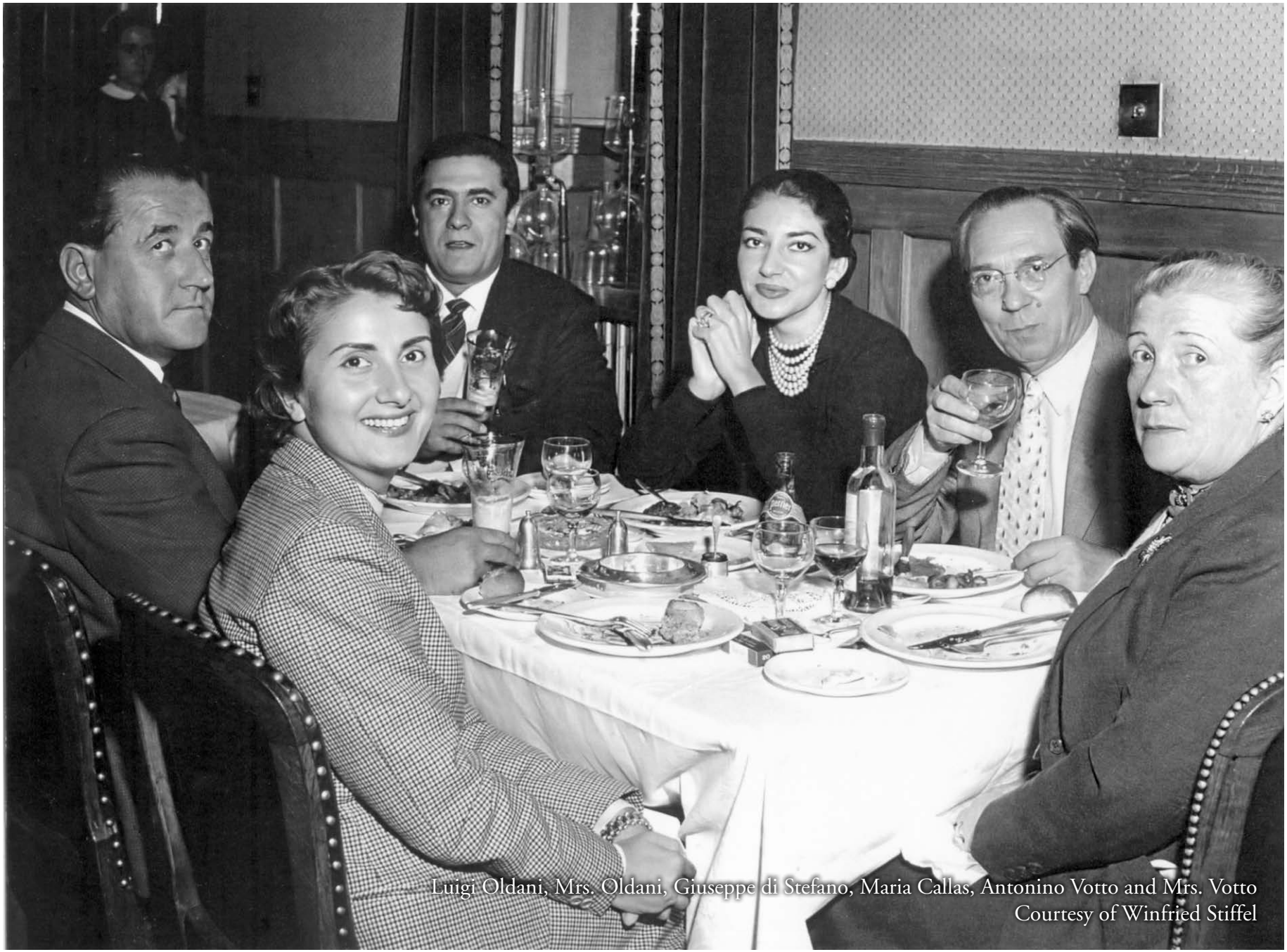
Maria Callas and Giovanni Battista Meneghini
Courtesy of Cosimo Capanni

Giuseppe di Stefano, Maria Callas and Antonino Votto
Courtesy of Winfried Stiffel



Luigi Oldani, Mrs. Oldani, Giuseppe di Stefano, Maria Callas, Antonino Votto and Mrs. Votto
Courtesy of Winfried Stiffel

Press conference at the Calenodian Hotel, 23 August 1957
Courtesy of Frank Abe

At the Albany Restaurant, 30 August 1957
Courtesy of Frank Abe

At the Albany Restaurant, 30 August 1957
Courtesy of Frank Abe

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Pablo D. Berruti, producer

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