

University of Washington
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

presents

THE UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY

Robert Feist, *conductor*

with guest artists

Augusto Paglialunga, *tenor*

Frank Guarrera, *baritone*

February 21, 1986

8:00 PM, Meany Theater

PROGRAM

I Vespri Siciliani, Overture 8:32

La Forza del Destino

O tu che in seno agli angeli, Recitative and Aria, Act 3
Mr. Paglialunga 6:31

In vano, Alvaro, Recitative and Duet, Act 4
Mr. Paglialunga and Mr. Guarrera 9:18

Capriccio Sinfonico* 12:37

INTERMISSION

The Fountains of Rome, Symphonic Poem 15:26

Don Carlo

Dio che nell'alma infondere, Recitative and Duet, Act I
Mr. Paglialunga and Mr. Guarrera 3:41

Otello

Credo in un Dio crudel, Aria, Act II 4:48
Mr. Guarrera

Si pel ciel, Scena and Duet, Act II 6:46
Mr. Paglialunga and Mr. Guarrera

GIACOMO PUCCINI
(1858-1924)

OTTORINO RESPIGHI
(1879-1936)

GIUSEPPE VERDI

GIUSEPPE VERDI

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Tape 10.989

GIUSEPPE VERDI
(1813-1901)

Tape 10.990

OTTORINO RESPIGHI
(1879-1936)

GIUSEPPE VERDI

PROGRAM NOTES

by Robert Feist

Verdi, the undisputed master of Italian opera, left a legacy of some 26 operas (there were several later revisions of earlier works under different titles), many of them, such as *Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Trovatore*, *Aida* and others, very familiar to opera-lovers, and others totally unfamiliar unless one encountered them in Italy or on recordings. On this concert we are focussing our attention on what may generally be called late-Verdi, highlighted by an Overture, arias and duets from several of these operas. Opening the program will be the stirring Overture to *I Vespri Siciliani*, premiered at the Paris Opera on June 13, 1855 as *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* and sung in French. An opera less successful than others and revived periodically in festivals or other major productions (as at the New York Metropolitan in the 1970s), its overture remains, however, one of Verdi's most significant—in fact, probably his best effort in this form next to the more popular *Forza del Destino*. That opera followed soon after, premiered on November 10, 1862 in St. Petersburg, Russia, was revised in 1869 for La Scala in Milan, and remains one of his most frequently performed later works. Among its most memorable excerpts are the tenor aria "O tu che in seno agli angeli" which opens Act III, and no less than three great duets for tenor and baritone. We have chosen the stirring confrontation between Alvaro and Don Carlo in Act IV as this evening's first example of Verdi's superb writing for the tenor and baritone voices. The plot situations of the *Forza* excerpts are as follows:

Act III. *Scene 1: A Wood Near Velletri, Italy.* Don Alvaro, believing Leonora dead, has enlisted in the Spanish army as Don Federico Herreros. He is constantly tormented by memories of the past, and to a melancholy air he soliloquizes, "O tu che in seno agli angeli."

Act IV. *Scene 1: The Monastery of Hornachuelos.* In the five years that have passed, Don Alvaro—who is now known as Padre Raphael—has become known for his immaculate life and his compassionate kindness toward all who suffer. The calm of Alvaro's retreat is broken when Carlo comes and demands to see Padre Raphael. While he waits, he sings "Invano Alvaro," in which he remarks on the futility of Alvaro's retirement and of his 'hypocrite's garb.'

When Alvaro enters, Carlo coldly presents him with a choice of two swords: they must fight to the death. Alvaro bids him leave; he is now a man of peace and cannot fight. Infuriated, Carlo replies, 'Coward!' Alvaro tries hard to convince Don Carlo that vengeance lies with God. In return he receives the most venomous insults. Slowly, yet inevitably, the benevolent friar becomes once again the fiery man of action. He prays for self-restraint; Carlo strikes him. Alvaro seizes the weapon, and, the convent being no place for a duel, the men rush out.

Among other late works are *Simon Boccanegra*, *Ballo in Maschera* and *Aida*, none of which contain tenor/baritone duets. A great one does occur in Verdi's *Don Carlos*, another opera commissioned by and premiered at the Paris Opera on March 11, 1867 in five acts, and later revised for La Scala in four acts. Among the incomparable pages for tenor and baritone in this opera is the protracted scene in Act I in the Monastery of St. Just in Spain, another of the great 'friendship' duets penned by Verdi.

Scene I of Act II takes place in the Monastery of St. Just, where Philip II's father, the great Emperor Charles V, retired on abdication and where his unhappy grandson Carlo is now nursing his sorrow. Carlo is joined by his great friend Rodrigo Marquis of Posa, in whom, during the course of a splendid duet, he confides. Posa is somewhat shocked to learn of Carlos' infatuation for his stepmother, but he persuades the young Infante to sink his private grief in aiding the oppressed Netherlands, with whose political aspirations Posa sympathizes and which now groan under the religious tyranny of Philip. Finally, in a rousing passage ("Dio che nell'alma infondere" which foreshadows a similar one, "Si; pel ciel") in *Otello*, the two friends pledge themselves to live and die together in the cause of freedom.

At the culmination of Verdi's career came *Otello* and *Falstaff*, both in advanced years and considered not only his greatest works but perhaps also the major achievements of Italian opera in terms of libretto, vocal writing and remarkable orchestration. From *Otello* (La Scala, February 5, 1887) comes two thrilling moments from Act II, the Credo for baritone which opens the act, and the great vengeance duet of Otello and Iago which concludes Act II.

The opera takes place in a seaport of Cyprus toward the end of the 15th century, a period when the island was under Venetian control. The second act is set in a hall on the ground floor of the castle, with a view of the garden. Iago counsels Cassio, despondent over his loss of rank, to beg Desdemona to intercede for him with her husband. Cassio decides to take the advice and goes into the garden to await her. Iago, his plot well on its way, proclaims his satanic Credo.

Iago sets about inflaming Otello to a frenzy of jealousy. He tells him that he has heard Cassio talking in his sleep of his love for Desdemona, bemoaning the fate that had given her to the Moor; he also claims to have seen Desdemona's handkerchief in Cassio's hand. Otello becomes frantic with rage and swears 'by the marble heaven' implacable revenge. The act ends with Iago joining him in his oath, "Si; pel ciel."

To conclude Part I of tonight's concert is a distinct novelty, Puccini's *Capriccio Sinfonico*, a work which, according to the publishers, constitutes not only a Northwest premiere, but one of the few performances in the country at all since its fairly recent emergence on recordings and in material available for performance. For the fascinating details concerning this early *Capriccio*, I turn to George Marek's excellent biography of Puccini:

The legend has grown up that Puccini 'was not particularly studious, those years in Milan.' That is what Vincent Seligman states in *Puccini Among Friends*. This is pure fiction. The evidence indicates rather that Puccini worked hard. The Conservatory has preserved some of his scholastic exercises. There exists, for example, a fugue which he was required to develop from a theme handed to him in a sealed envelope; the fugue is remarkably good. At the end of the composition there are the signatures of five instructors (including Ponchielli and Bazzini), which means that five men had examined the exercise. It is hardly likely that all five could be fooled. Puccini's first orchestral composition and the two following operas, however fledgling they may be, show a high degree of technical craftsmanship. He had acquired this craftsmanship through study.

Mascagni left the Conservatory without completing his course. 'I suffered,' Mascagni complained in later years. He chafed against the necessity of composing rounds of counterpoint and fugal exercises. Puccini did not. The dramatic-theory lessons may have bored him; compositional exercises interested him. He could hardly have completed a course consisting of Pianoforte, Advanced Harmony, Advanced Counterpoint, Composition, and History of Music, getting by only on his charm, of which, to be sure, he had a great deal, then and later.

The end of his three-year course was approaching. He was to be graduated in July, 1883. It was necessary that he submit a final 'master' composition. The custom was similar to that of submitting a Ph.D. thesis before receiving the degree. While working on his composition, he wrote to his mother:

Tomorrow I go back to Ponchielli's. I was there also this morning, but I could not talk much with him because his wife was there also. He promised me to interest Ricordi in my cause, and he told me that so far the exams have gone well. I am working like a dog to finish my piece, with which I am making good progress.

--Undated

This piece was a composition for orchestra called "Capriccio sinfonico."

Poor Ponchielli seems to have had a difficult time with the *Capriccio*. He was used to the neatly written compositions of his students. But this was something else. Every morning Puccini would arrive at his house his pockets stuffed with torn pieces of paper, scraps of music paper, as well as margins torn off newspapers or blank pages from his mother's letters, and these would be covered with the most illegible hieroglyphics, the notes huddling together like frightened sparrows, the lines rising and falling as on a tempestuous sea, the whole thing full of erasures, ink spots, and an occasional smudge of oil. Each morning he stormed in, begging Ponchielli's advice and counsel. It was difficult to make any sense of this ragout of notes, let alone follow the development of the themes. Yet when the composition was finished and a legible manuscript had been produced, when the parts had been copied and the school orchestra sat down to the first rehearsals, it appeared that this was a coherent and indeed a brilliant piece of work, as unlike in content to the regulation school composition as it had been in looks. The *Capriccio* consists of three sections: an introduction, a principal section, and an epilogue. It is vigorous and exuberant, though its excess of exuberance betrays that it is a student composition. It is often charming and witty, though occasionally it strains for the bizarre effect, as if Puccini were bent on showing his originality at all costs. 'See how I mastered the handling of instruments,' it seems to say. 'Observe how daring is this turn I give to a phrase.' The orchestration does show assurance, however, and indicates not only that Puccini had benefited by school exercises, but also that he possessed a natural talent for orchestral scoring. In the middle section occurs a theme which is note for note the same as the opening theme of *La Bohème*. It is that rather impatient suggestion which Puccini throws out before the curtain rises and which makes so interesting a beginning to the opera, transporting us immediately into the unquiet room of the four friends. In the lyrical episodes of the *Capriccio* also are to be found intimations of the later work, and these intimations are not—as we shall see—accidental.

The student concert was reviewed in the important paper, the *Perseveranza*, by its critic, the eminent Filippo Filippi. The review appeared on the fifteenth of July, 1883. Mr. Filippi had often proved himself a liberal critic, favoring the new: he had begun his career with the championship of Verdi's *Rigoletto*, and continued to be one of Verdi's most articulate admirers. It was Filippi who, in 1871, journeyed to Cairo for the premiere of *Aida* and who sent back a glowing account of the occasion. Of the *Capriccio* he wrote:

In Puccini we have a decisive and rare musical temperament, one especially symphonic. There is unity of style, personality, character. In his *Capriccio sinfonico* there is a good deal which composers more experienced . . . have not succeeded in doing. I am talking, mind you, of living composers . . . There are no uncertainties or gropings to be found in the young author . . . He does not lose his melodies and does not mislay his ideas. The ideas are clear, robust, effective, and sustained with much truth . . .

This was indeed an exceptional notice. Puccini read and reread it. He bought a number of copies of the newspapers and sent them home. His teachers were quite as excited as he, particularly when, as a result of the article, Franco Faccio, the famous conductor and friend of Verdi's, offered to perform the *Capriccio* in a concert at the Scala. Though this plan seems not to have been carried out, the *Capriccio* was immediately published by the publishing house of G. Lucca, and Puccini had the satisfaction of seeing the score of his first work, in an adaptation for two pianos, displayed in the windows of the music shops of Milan.

On July 16, 1883, two days after the *Capriccio* was performed, he had also the satisfaction of receiving a little bronze medal which testified that he was now a graduate of the Reale Conservatorio di Musica in Milano: Puccini was now to be addressed as Maestro.

Composed in 1916, Respighi's tribute to Rome's fountains was first performed in Rome on February 10 1918, under the direction of Arturo Toscanini. The concert was part of a series organized for the benefit of artists disabled in the First World War. The audience received it warmly, and critics hailed Respighi's mastery of orchestral color. The American premiere occurred at a concert of the New York Philharmonic Society on February 13, 1919.

The fountains are specified as follows: (1) The Fountain of Valle Giulia at dawn; (2) The Triton Fountain in the morning; (3) The Fountain of Trevi at midday; and (4) The Villa Medici Fountain at sunset. An analysis of the music, appearing in the score in Italian, French, and English, runs as follows:

In this symphonic poem the composer has endeavored to give expression to the sentiments and vision suggested to him by four of Rome's fountains, contemplated at the hour in which their character is most in harmony with the surrounding landscape, or in which their beauty appears most impressive to the observer.

The first part of the poem, inspired by the Fountain of Valle Giulia, depicts a pastoral landscape; droves of cattle pass and disappear in the fresh, damp mists of the Roman dawn.

A sudden loud and insistent blast of horns above the trills of the whole orchestra introduces the second part, "The Triton Fountain." It is like a joyous call, summoning troops of naiads and tritons, who come running up pursuing each other and mingling in a frenzied dance between the jets of water.

Next there appears a solemn theme, borne on the undulations of the orchestra. It is Fountain of Trevi at midday. The solemn theme, passing from the wood to the brass instruments, assumes a triumphal character. Trumpets peal; across the radiant surface of the water there passes Neptune's chariot, drawn by sea horses and followed by a train of sirens and tritons. The procession then vanishes, while faint trumpet blasts resound in the distance.

The fourth part, the Villa Medici Fountain, is announced by a sad theme, which rises above a subdued warbling. It is the nostalgic hour of sunset, the air is full of the sound of tolling bells, birds twittering, leaves rustling. Then all dies peacefully into the silence of the night.

PERSONNEL

Violin I

Rob Prinzing,
concertmaster
 Michelle Davis
 Shaun McBride
 Susie Kim
 Jennifer Adams
 Jim Mihara
 Michelle Burgess
 Paul Susen
 Susanne Vetter
 Rebecca Clemens

Violin II

Leif Ivar Pedersen
 Cathan Baker
 Judy Swartz
 Ruth Whitlock
 Eric Rogstad
 Shelby Eaton
 Heidi Vincent
 Winston Wu

Viola

Chris Boyd
 April Acevez
 Linda Chang
 Michelle Sayles
 Matthew Underwood
 Jubilee Cooke
 Julia Young
 Christopher Platz

Cello

Tony Arnone
 Joseph Bichsel
 Bret Smith
 Michael Center
 Tim Janof
 Teresa Wang
 Karin Bauer

Bass
 Veronika Rudolph
 Tom Hamilton
 Chaney Darlington
 Toni Rush
 Brian Kennedy
 Jason Holt

Flute/Piccolo

Laura Hamm
 Susan Telford
 Kathy Frank
 Maya Johnson
 Susan Hallstead
 Alene Fairbanks

Oboe

Tad Margelli
 Alison Grauman

English horn

David Barnes

Bassoon

Krista Lake
 Susan Levine
 Eric Shankland

Contrabassoon

Jeff Eldridge

Clarinet

Angie Fisher
 Libby Sandusky

Bass Clarinet

Bev Setzer

Horn

Andrew Brusletten
 Grant Brockmeyer
 Pete Hodges
 Ron Nelson

Trumpet

Craig Ball
 Warren Johnson
 Richard Kodama
 Samuel Mann

Trombone

Daniel Haeck
 Andrew Hillaker

Bass Trombone

Dave Bentley

Tuba

Spug J. Giblet

Percussion

Dan Adams
 Jon Hansen

Timpani

Adam Kuehn

Harp

John Carrington
 Melissa Brennick

Piano

Lisa Bergman

Celeste

Tim Brown

UPCOMING CONCERTS:

February 24: Percussion Ensemble, Tom Collier, *director*. Roethke Auditorium.

February 25: University Chorale Invitational, Joan Catoni Conlon, *director*. 7:30 performance.

February 26: The Contemporary Group. ELECTRIC ZOO, featuring works by Stuart Dempster, John Rahn and others to display the "technical prowess of Meany."

February 27-March 2: Opera Double Bill. *The Feast of Our Lady of the Dove* by Tomas Breton, and Claudio Monteverdi's *The Combat of Tancredi and Clorinda*.

March 3: Jazz Combo, Tom Collier, *director*.

March 4: University Singers.

March 5: Concert Band, Richard Byrnes, *director*.

March 5: University Madrigals, Joan Conlon, *director*. HUB Auditorium, tickets only at the door.

March 6: Faculty Recital. Music of India featuring Yunus Husain Khan, *vocalist of the Agra style*, and Faiyaz Khan, *tabla*.

March 10: The Studio Jazz Ensemble, Roy Cummings, *director*.

March 12: University Oratorio and Symphony, Abraham Kaplan, *conductor*, with guest artist Bela Siki, *piano*.

March 14: Young Composers. Music Auditorium.