

Saturdee Opry Links Comfort Edition/ Rip Rense

Saturdee Opry Links' Comfort Edition is posted for your discomfort. Ten selections---some familiar (maybe), some new (probably)---and overture. Yes, another week, and your faithful operatic promoter of many years has come through for you, yet again! Keep those cards and letters coming folks, and go to my page, hit "reload," for all the wunnerful wunnerful selections.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0TSDcPW2Kk>

Saturdee Opry Links Overture

The warm, lilting, bracing "Elixir of Love," by Donizetti.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xri8-1IgRDE>



Pagiughli



Milnes



Grist



Daza

1.

What a great thing to have redoubtable friends! How much has this fundamental experience of life been compromised today, I wonder, by acrimony-profiting media? Not to mention so-called "cancel culture," a major by-product of acrimony-profit. Why, just a couple of weeks ago, SOL "cancelled" a lifelong friend after one too many Fox News-esque attacks on SOL's character. Well. All that aside, here is a marvelous selection from an era when literature, art, music extolled the virtue of friendship, loyalty, stout hearts, bonhomie. Perhaps one should re-label the romantic era as the "pre-cynicism" era? This is a grand duet from Verdi's later opera, "Don Carlos," between the fast friends, Carlos, son of the king, and Rodrigue, the Marquis of Posa. Feel free to cut to the chase, and begin at 3:40, if you do not want any build-up. Placido Domingo and Sherill Milnes at their best.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEr4MiiO_1Q

Synopsis:

Carlos' dear friend, Rodrigue, Marquis of Posa, who has just arrived from the oppressed land of Flanders, enters. The two greet each other joyfully. Posa asks for Carlos's aid on behalf of the suffering people there. Carlos reveals that he loves his stepmother---the young wife of his father! Posa is first shocked, but then sympathetic. He encourages Carlos to leave Spain and go to Flanders, and to forget his pain by focusing on political activity there. The two men swear eternal friendship.

Translation:

(Search for second "scene and duet."

Or cut to the duet, and search for "pierced.")

http://www.impresario.ch/libretto/libverdon_e.htm

2.



Berlioz and Hair

Here is an exquisite item making its SOL debut, a duet between cousins Hero and Beatrice from Hector Berlioz's 1862 opera, "Beatrice et Benedict," an adaptation of Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing." Talk about finding some kind of sonic realization of ethereal beauty. . .this duet is subtly yet brilliantly evocative, even hypnotic. The act one scene: the citizens of the Sicilian town of Messina have gathered to welcome home the victorious army of Don Pedro of Aragon, following a successful battle campaign against the Moors. Héro eagerly awaits the return of her fiancé, Claudio. Meanwhile, Béatrice greets the returning Bénédict in a comically different way. As in the play, the two take great pleasure in trading insults, masking their mutual attraction. But later, there is a sense of the supernatural lurking underneath, specifically, the mystery and eternal beauty of a still summer night ("Peaceful and Good

Night!"), the nocturne duet which concludes the first act. Here it is, with Christiane Karg (Héro) & Ann-Beth Solvang (Ursule).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XhF92ahSnds>

ANNND. . . If you liked it, here is a nicer rendering, *in full*, with contralto Élodie Méchain (Ursule) Ailish Tynan:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nx38dVy_ocU

Translation:

URSULE et HÉRO

Nuit paisible et sereine!

La lune, douce reine,

Qui plane en souriant;

L'insecte des prairies,

Dans les herbes fleuries

En secret bruissant;

Philomèle

Qui mêle

Aux murmures du bois

Les splendeurs de sa voix;

L'hirondelle

Fidèle,

Caressant sous nos toits

Sa nichée en émoi;

Dans sa coupe de marbre

Ce jet d'eau retombant,

Écumant;

L'ombre de ce grand arbre,

En spectre se mouvant

Sous le vent;

Harmonies

Infinies,

Que vous avez d'attraits

Et de charmes secrets

Pour les âmes attendries!

ENGLISH:

URSULA and HERO

Peaceful and serene night!

The moon, sweet queen,

Who hovers while smiling;

The meadow insect,

In the flowering herbs

In secret rustling;

Philomela

Who mixes

To the whispers of the wood

*The splendors of his voice;
The swallow
Faithful,
Caressing under our roofs
Her brood in turmoil;
In its marble cup
This falling jet of water,
Foaming;
The shadow of this big tree,
As a moving specter
Downwind;
Harmonies
Infinite,
That you have attractions
And secret charms
For tender souls!*

About the opera:

<https://thelistenersclub.com/2015/11/02/beatrice-et-benedict-berliozs-neglected-comedy/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B%C3%A9atrice_et_B%C3%A9n%C3%A9dict

3.



Hoffmann and Hair

If you thought the previous selection by Berlioz might foreshadow the ever-lovely "Belle Nuit, Nuit d'amor" from Offenbach's "Tales of Hoffmann" (1880), you are not alone. Whether one influenced the other, SOL does not know. Perhaps the "similarity" is just a function of two gorgeous female voices singing languidly of similarly transporting subject matter, in similar meter. In any case, this opera fantastique is based on the writings of E.T.A Hoffmann, turning several of his more loved tales into a sprawling opera-as-omnibus. This story, "Giulietta," (act three) begins with the famous barcarolle "Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour" ("Beautiful night, oh night of love"). Hoffmann falls in love with the courtesan Giulietta and thinks she returns his affections, but Giulietta is not in love with Hoffmann. Still, she seduces him under the orders of Captain Dapertutto, who promises her a diamond if she steals

Hoffmann's reflection from a mirror ("Scintille, diamant", "Sparkle, diamond"). But of course! And it gets weirder from there. Here is a performance with sopranos who, sad to say, are not named:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w30ireL6gUY>

ANNND, here is the sequence reimagined as a ballet in the brilliant Powell-Pressburger movie of the opera:

<https://youtu.be/jtJJ2tS4DiI?si=vxvii2yIAnWZRU41>

Translation:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belle_nuit,_%C3%B4_nuit_d'amour

4.

In today's Arias of Comfort Edition of SOL, it must be explained that this does not strictly refer to arias that explicitly offer comfort---but, rather, are comforting for their affecting nature. So we turn to the extraordinarily pure soprano of the largely forgotten Brooklyn-born Lina Pagliughi. Daughter of Italian immigrants, she wound up in San Francisco as a tyke, where she immediately took to singing. Somehow, little Lina came to the attention of the great soprano, Luisa Tetrazzini (perhaps in town for an appearance with SF Opera?), who gave her enormous encouragement and confirmed her potential. And so at age 15, Pagliughi picked up stakes and went to Italy with her family, in order to formally study music. She debuted in Milan's Teatro Comunale, as Gilda in Verdi's "Rigoletto," in 1927. And get this: she sang in the original Italian dub of Disney's "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" in 1938! Critics throughout Europe acclaimed her as the successor of Toti dal Monte (1893–1975) in the Rossini-Donizetti-Bellini repertory, yet she hardly ever sang outside Italy. Weight gain in ensuing years ended her "girlish" opera roles, and she retired from the stage in 1947. We are lucky to have recordings of her limpid, agile voice today. Here she is in very rare footage from the 1930's with "Qui sola vergin rosa" from "Martha" by Flowtow, an adaptation of Thomas Moore's "The Last Rose of Summer."

*Qui sola, vergin rosa,
Come puoi tu fiorir?
Ancora mezza ascosa .
E presso già a morir!
Non hai per te rugiade,
Colpita sei dal gel;
Il capo tuo già cade
Chino sul molle stel!
Porche sola, ignorata,
Languir nel tuo giardin,
Dal vento tormentata...
In preda a un rio destin?
Sul cespite tremante
Ti colgo, giovin fior,
Su questo core amante
Così morrai d'amor.*

ENGLISH:

*Here alone, pink virgin,
How can you flourish?*

*Still half hidden.
And already close to dying!
You have no dews for you,
You are hit by the gel;
Your head is already falling
Bent over the soft star!
Porche alone, ignored,
Languish in your garden,
Tormented by the wind...
In the grip of a Rio Destin?
On the trembling asset
I seize you, young flower,
On this loving heart
So you will die of love.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTYZtxMhCOW>



ANNND. . .here is Pagliughi with "Some Day My Prince Will Come" in Italian!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wvdviq_a1Hg

5.

Here, again, is the forgotten coloratura soprano, Lina Pagliughi, and a remarkable voice that is like spring water---refreshing, pure, a touch sweet. This is the beloved Bellini aria, "Ah non credea mirarti," segueing into the passage, "Ah non giunge," from "La Sonnambula." (The tenor is Tagliavini, the bass is Cesar Siepi.) Have a ball.

Synopsis:

Amina sleepwalks into the bed of a stranger, Count Rodolfo, who is in the village incognito. Elvino is jealous of the Count's admiration of Amina and calls off their wedding. The villagers turn on Amina, and jealous Elvino takes back their engagement ring. Count Rodolfo---you can count on him---proclaims Amina's innocence and explains that she was just sleepwalking. Suddenly Amina appears, sleepwalking at a great height along a treacherous ledge. Afraid of waking her, the villagers watch and pray for her as she slowly reaches safety. Still asleep, Amina mourns the loss of Elvino, remembering the flowers he gave her that have since faded, and searching for her lost ring ("Ah! non credea mirarti"). Convinced of her innocence and unable to watch her suffer any longer, Elvino puts the ring back on her finger.

Waking, Amina's embarrassment turns to joy when she realizes that her dream has come true. Zounds!

More synopsis here:

<https://www.metopera.org/user-information/synopses-archive/la-sonnambula>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UESnnVNnsY8>

Translation:

<https://lyricstranslate.com/en/ah-non-credea-mirarti-ah-non-giunge-ah-i-didnt-think-id-see-you-ah-it-cant-mana.html>

6.



Siggy and Forest Bird (presumably with The Beach Boys)

Anyone who does not love birdsong is not human. It's really that simple. Is human singing just an imitation of birds? Is operatic singing that imitation's highest exponent? I'll leave these sophomoric notions for parlor fun, and move on to posting a human singing like a bird, or is it a bird singing like a human? Either way, it is enchanting, and one of SOL's favorite moments in Wagner's "Der Ring des Nibelungen" four-opera cycle. This, of course, would be the "forest bird" (Waldvogel) sequence in the third of these operas, "Siegfried," in which our hero, wandering through a forest, hears the beautiful call of a bird. Using a carved flute, he attempts feebly to imitate the lyric beauty of the tune, but is soon set upon by Fafnir, the giant-turned-dragon. It's a long story, but suffice to say that after slaying Fafnir, Siggy tastes the dragon's blood, and discovers to his wonder that it gives him the power to understand birdsong! He listens again to the forest bird, and, by gods, it turns out that she was giving Siegfried instructions, essentially telling him that since he now owns Fafnir's stolen Rheingold, he can. . . rule the world! Hence the expression, "A little bird told me." (Not really!)

*Hei! Siegfried now owns all the Nibelung's
hoard;
if hid in the cavern the hoard he finds!
Let him but win him the Tarnhelm,
'twill serve him for deeds of renown:
but could he discover the ring,
it would make him the lord of the world!*

Here is wonderful Reri Grist, a pioneer African-American soprano, gloriously singing the bird's part in a brief excerpt:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wczYe_pcu6Q

ANNND. . .

Here is the absolutely transporting "Forest Murmurs" music from the opera, chronicling Siegfried's journey---but here with nature settings and scurrying creatures. Right, SOL is not above such cheap fare!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08vTtu4pmjk>

ANNNNND. . . Finally, here is the "forest bird" scene with Siggy. Note that the birdy is indicated by a bird puppet on the soprano's wrist. Now that's high production value! And if Siggy looks like a big, dumb galoot, yes, folks, that was intentional. The character is an innocent, a naif, untainted by the temptations of the world. You know, like SOL.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EuXR9tVqh_0

Translation:

(Go here and search for third "woodbird," beginning "Hei, Siegfried.")

https://www.murashev.com/opera/Siegfried_libretto_English_German

7.



The ending of Richard Strauss's genius 1911 tragi-comedy, "Der Rosenkavalier" ("The Rose Bearer), an opera about love and aging, is one of the gentlest and most pleasing in the genre, fairly glowing with forbearance, forgiveness, understanding. In essence, the three major characters' (including a mezzo in a trouser role) conflicts are resolved. The aging Marschallin accepts that youth is lost, releasing boy-toy Octavian to be with the woman he loves, Sophie. M. then withdraws, with a promise to Sophie that she will offer her social-climbing father, Faninal, a face-saving ride home in her carriage. Sophie and Octavian run to each other. Faninal and the Marschallin see them locked in an embrace, and with a last, bittersweet look toward her lost lover, the Marschallin heads for the carriage. Here are Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Sena Jurinac, Anneliese Rothenberger, in a 1962 film version. Mit der Englishen Subtitlen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=31CtNc0Zp2c>

8.

There is nothing quite like a great baritone aria, not just because of the deep vocal resonance, or conveyed fortitude, nobility, heartbreak, what-have-you---but just the uniquely comforting quality of the voice. Here is a fabulous example, from Donizetti's "Elixir of Love," a stalwart yet melodious thing called "Come Paride vezzoso. . ." or "As charming Paris. . ." Sung by a blowhard army sergeant, it's a kind of brash, insufferable declaration of the character's own irresistible personality, where women are

concerned. You know, like SOL. And yet it has that uniquely touching baritone *je ne se quois*. Here sung with panache by one Alfredo Daza in a Glyndebourne Opera production.

<https://youtu.be/ge1cGeXXqXQ?si=IXQkIxQErlJtrz9D>

OR. . .if you want to hear it sung more beautifully. . .

https://youtu.be/zXrk3k8iWU4?si=5aNanXcr_Q4ws7

Translation:

https://www.aria-database.com/translations/elisir04_come.txt

9.



Scratch

The tenor of the last aria calls for more, doesn't it? It's that uniquely burnished baritone tenor that is always, almost no matter the content, reassuring and strengthening. Well, seems to me. (What's he talking about, "baritone tenor," huh?) Here is a brisk, almost brusque, mildly militaristic prayer from Gounod's "Faust." This is "Avant de quitter ces lieux," or "Before I leave this town," in which the soldier, Valentin, prays for his sister's safety when he goes off to war. Seeing as her name is Marguerite, and Old Scratch figures into the proceedings, we know how effectively this prayer is answered. Here is the great Dmitri Hvorostovsky in a Royal Opera performance late in his career, with English subtitles.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wz74ej1YRcM>

FINAL BOW:

This week's Comfort Edition of SOL concludes with a wish written by Mozart for his rollicking farce, "Cosi Fan Tutte." Nothing farcical about this passage, of course, and may it serve as an expression of hope, however unwarranted, that the coming horrors to be wrought by Trump and his coterie of kooks are ultimately a passing American glitch. This is "Soave sia il vento," or "May the Wind Be Gentle." It concludes act one, scene one, which goes about like this:

In a cafe, Ferrando and Guglielmo (two officers) express certainty that their fiancées (Dorabella and Fiordiligi, respectively) will be eternally faithful. Their friend, Don Alfonso, expresses skepticism and claims that there is no such thing as a faithful woman. He lays a wager with the two officers, claiming he can prove in a day's time that those two, like all women, will prove fickle. The wager is accepted: the two officers will pretend to have been called off to war; soon thereafter they will return in disguise and

each attempt to seduce the other's lover. But of course they will---it's Mozart! The scene shifts to the two women, who are praising their men. One Alfonso arrives to announce the bad news: the officers have been called off to war. Ferrando and Guglielmo arrive, brokenhearted, and bid farewell. As the boat with the men sails away, Alfonso and the sisters wish them safe travel (trio: "Soave sia il vento"—"May the wind be gentle"). Here it is, with English subtitles. Corinne Winters as Fiordiligi, Angela Brower as Dorabella and Johannes Martin Kränzle as Don Alfonso.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bR2U8bXtUfI>



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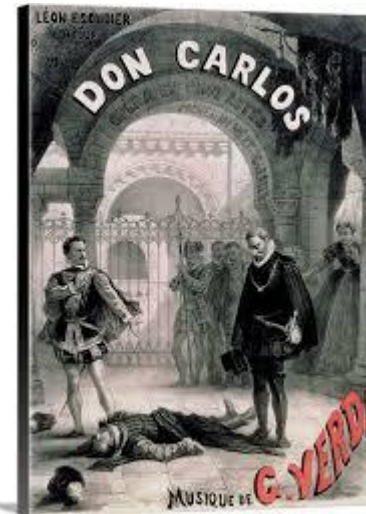
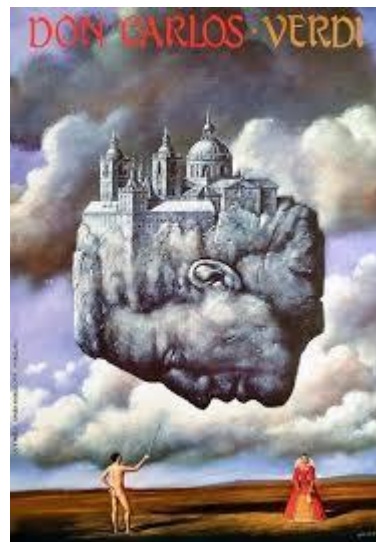
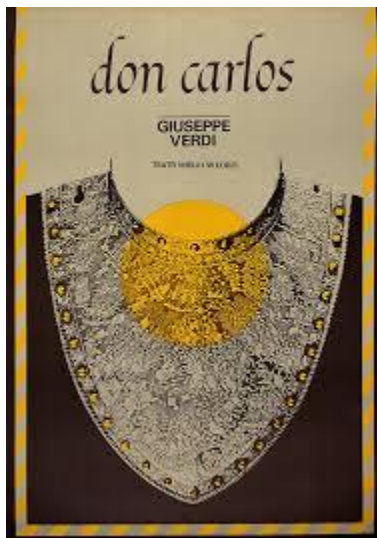
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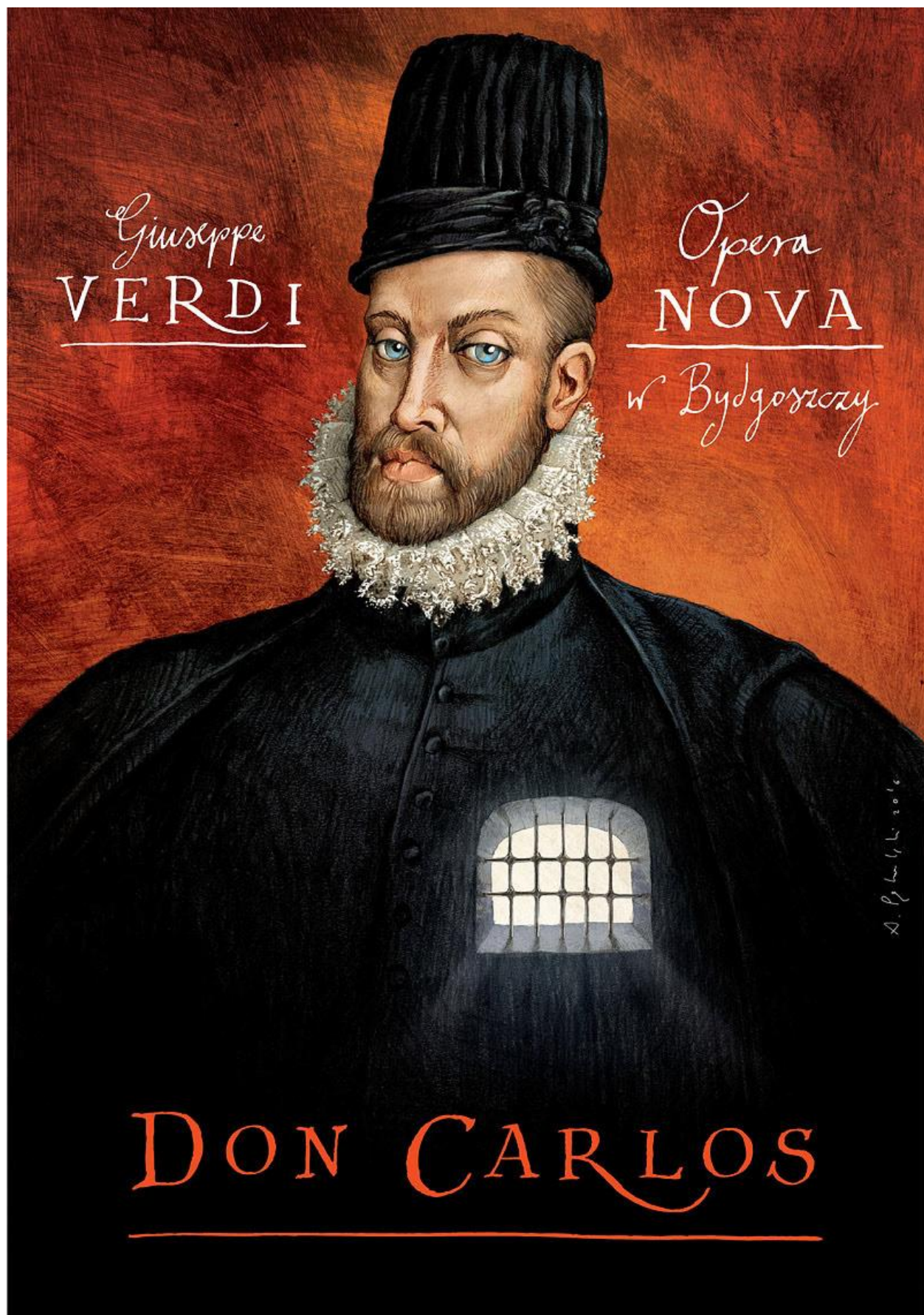
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