

Saturdee Opry Links Grab Bag Edition/ Rip Rense

Saturdee Opry Links is/are posted for your ambivalence. Mozart delight, Catalani drama, Puccini magic, Canteloube transport, a fabulous Bashkort (!) folk song, a marvelous young mezzo---plus extras and overture. Call direct, call collect, but call today. Operators are standing by.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Id0HUt4eNkU>

Saturdee Opry Links Overture

The zesty prelude to Mozart's early opera, "Ascanio in Alba." He was three months old when he wrote it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-ZP8VccnKQ>



Aigul Akhmetshina



Laszlo Polgar



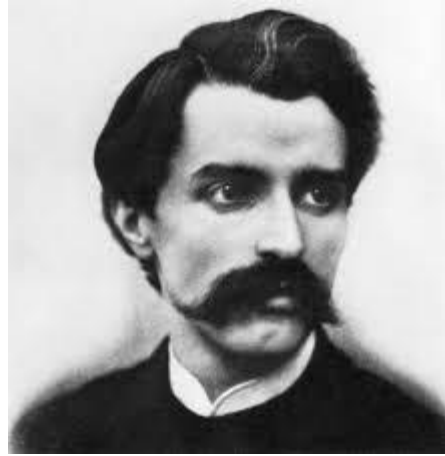
Martha Colalillo



Renata Tebaldi



Common Nightingale



Uncommon Catalani

1.

Goddesses and nymphs, anyone? Here's the gist of Mozart's early (K. 111) opera, "Ascanio in Alba": Ascanio is the son of Venus by Aeneas. Never mind that Venus is also Aeneas's mother. Vice is nice, but incest is best! Anyhow, Venus extols the charms of Alba and invites her son to go and rule there. But, she warns, do not reveal your true identity to the nymph, Silvia (to whom he is betrothed), in order to test her fidelity. Nothing like deceit to liven up an opera plot. This is lovely and beguiling ditty, "Dal tuo gentil sembiante," sung by Natalie Dessay. It's a trouser role, as was common at the time, in which the shepherd, Fauno, tells Ascanio that he seems like a wonderful human being that would make any woman happy. Even a woman in pants pretending to be a man, presumably.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rW7IP-J2Klo>

Translation:

*Dal tuo gentil sembiante
risplende un'alma grande:
e quel chiaror che spande
quasi adorar ti fa.
Se mai divieni amante
felice la donzella
che a fiamma così bella
allor s'accenderà.*

ENGLISH:

*From your gentle countenance
a great soul shines:
and that light that it spreads
it almost makes you adore.
If you ever become a lover
the damsel is happy
what a flame so beautiful
then it will light up.*

2.



Corelli

Putting the cajones back on the tenor, as it were, here is Franco Corelli with a lesser known item, "Nel verde maggio," or "In green May. . ." This is from the intriguing little forgotten opera, "Loreley," by Alfredo Catalani, still (barely) in repertory. (But ahead of the opera by the same name, written by Max Bruch.) Poor Catalani wrote only six operas, his life cut short by tuberculosis at age 39, and "Loreley" was his penultimate work. Seems his stuff was less popular in its day than the dominant *verismo* style that he resisted, and his last and best-known opera, "La Wally," endures primarily for having featured a soprano aria in the 1981 movie, "Diva." Yes, as SOL too frequently observes, Catalani's life would make for a good opera, especially considering his bitterness over Puccini's popularity, which drove him to accusations of plagiarism. Now, "Loreley" did pretty well in its day, if for no other reason the fantastic German myth on which it is based. In essence: Walter seduces the orphan, Loreley, along the banks of the Rhine. He is in love with her, but is counseled to remain faithful to his betrothed, Anna, which he does. Loreley is crushed, and makes a deal with Alberich, king of the Rhine River, to be his bride in exchange for acquiring such beauty and allure as to drive Walter crazy. Which ultimately happens, when the poor fellow drowns himself. Yes, it's a cheery tale! And yes, Catalani's music (as well as plot) emulates Wagner, who also wrote a little item centered around the Rhine.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hU8DRfWGvxI>

*Nel verde maggio, un dì dal bosco
a questa spiaggia il piè movea;
cadea la notte per l'aër fosco,
l'astro d'argento già risplendea.
Quando ad un tratto solinga vergine
divinamente bella m'apparve...
Laggiù del Reno sedea sul margine,
come regina d'eteree larve.
Sciolte sugli omeri le chiome bionde
pareano un manto di luce e d'or;*

*e d'eco in eco per quelle sponde
volava un languido inno d'amor!*

ENGLISH:

*In the green May, a day from the woods
to this beach the foot moved;
night fell across the dark air,
the silver star was already shining.
When suddenly a lonely virgin
divinely beautiful she appeared to me...
Down there on the Rhine he sat on the edge,
like queen of ethereal larvae.
Blonde locks loose on shoulders
they seemed like a cloak of light and gold;
and from echo to echo along those shores
a languid hymn of love flew!*

SOL EXTRA!



The folk tale goes. . . Lorelai was a lovely young maiden whose beauty was so bewitching that she caused sailors to wreck their ships. There are several different versions of the myth but all are centered around the so-called Lorelei Rock.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lorelei>

3.

One can readily discern Wagnerian influence in Catalani's "Loreley," very clearly in this rather thrilling extended passage beginning with "Ove son? Donde vengo. . ." sung most ably by the Argentine soprano, Martha Colalillo. What is going on here? In essence: hell hath no fury like a woman scorned. Loreley, a virgin, has been seduced by Walter because, well, it seemed a good idea at the time. Besides, he was

smitten, and only later forsook Loreley because he happened to be, uh, engaged. But he will soon pay, and you can glean just how much from Loreley's rage. Here, Loreley plots with the Rhine maidens to make a deal with Alberich, king of the Rhine, to exact revenge against Walter. The opera merits revival.

<https://youtu.be/Hibkx4QEixQ?si=tzocpKSFSDhvLs9J>

About the opera:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loreley_\(opera\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loreley_(opera))

Signed photo of Martha Colalillo for sale, cheap!

<https://www.ebay.com/itm/190410646982>

By golly, she's on Facebook!

<https://www.facebook.com/martha.colalillo/>

Translation:

LORELEY

Ove son?... donde vengo?...

e dove vado?...

e che m'importa?...

Sono un fantasma di fanciulla morta,

che nel mistero della selva oscura

vagola senza meta alla ventura!...

Impreca all'uom che amasti, ei mi diceva,

impreca al vil, ingrato!

Nel mio manier un rito si prepara...

«Un'altra io traggio all'ara!»

Ma... forse è un orrido

sogno che mi sconvolge e mente e cor...

Forse io m'immagino

d'esser tradita ed egli m'ama ancor!

Oh! se, svegliandomi,

riveder lo potessi a me d'acanto,

oh! se un suo bacio

scender sentissi ad asciugarmi il pianto!...

Ecco! ei mi chiama... ei m'ama!

(poi tornando ad un tratto al sentimento del vero)

Che dissi?... Ah! no! follia!

Son queste larve d'egra fantasia...

Realtà l'angoscia che mi strazia il core...

chi mi compensa del rapito onore?

SPIRITI DELL'AERE

Chi irresistibil spiri

nuovo strazio d'amor al vile in seno!

LORELEY

E lo può far?

SPIRITI DELL'AERE

Albrich, il re del Reno!

LORELEY

(con impeto di subitanea risoluzione)
Ebbene! ogni pietà spenta in me sia...
e tu fatti di bronzo, anima mia!

LORELEY

O forze recondite
degli antri più cupi,
che sin dalle viscere
scrollate le rupi,
sorgete, accorrete,
v'attendo... son qua.

SPIRITI DELL'AERE

Ci chiami?...

Che brami?...

Favella... siamo qua.

LORELEY

Voglio beltà che affascini,
sguardo che il cor conquida,
voce che scenda all'anima,
amor che inebri e uccida!

SPIRITI DELL'AERE

L'avrai, se giuri al Reno
fede di sposa...

LORELEY

E sia!

Giuro, pur ch'io mi vendichi...

SPIRITI DELL'AERE

Vendetta avrai! Ma pria
del mistico connubio
compi il terribil rito...

L'onda nuzial del vortice
ti fa l'estremo invito!...

Confida ad essa il pianto
dell'ultimo dolor,
e, per divino incanto,
sei rediviva ancor.

LORELEY

A te si sposi, o mistico
fiume, l'ambascia mia!
Spoglio il mio vel...

SPIRITI DELL'AERE

Le braccia t'apre lo sposo...

LORELEY

E sia!

ENGLISH:

(When all is silent, She frantically comes down from one cliff from the bottom and goes to the front of the scene: She has pale face, disheveled features, glassy eyes. . .)

Where am I?... where do I come from?...

and where am I going?...

and what do I care?...

*I am a ghost of a dead girl,
than in the mystery of the dark forest
wanders aimlessly on adventure!...*

*Curse the man you loved, he told me,
curse the vile, ungrateful!*

In my manner a ritual is being prepared. . .

*But... maybe it's a ravine
dream that shocks me and lies and runs...*

*Maybe I'm imagining it
of being betrayed and he still loves me!*

*Oh! if, when I wake up,
I could see him again next to me,*

*Oh! if a kiss from him
come down to dry my tears!...*

*Here you are! he calls me... he loves me!
(then suddenly returning to the feeling of truth)*

What did I say?... Ah! No! folly!

These are larvae of evil fantasy...

Reality is the anguish that tears my heart apart...

Who compensates me for the stolen honor?

SPIRITS OF THE AIR

*Whoever breathes irresistibly
new torment of love to the vile in the bosom!*

LORELEY

And can he do it?

SPIRITS OF THE AIR

Albrich, the King of the Rhine!

LORELEY

(with an impetus of sudden resolution)

*Well! let all pity be extinguished in me...
and you are made of bronze, my soul!*

LORELEY

*O hidden forces
of the darkest caves,
that from the bowels
shake the rocks,
arise, run,
I'm waiting for you... I'm here.*

SPIRITS OF THE AIR

Can you call us?...

What do you crave?...

Say it... we're here.

LORELEY

*I want beauty that fascinates,
gaze that conquers the heart,
voice that descends to the soul,
love that inebriates and kills!*

SPIRITS OF THE AIR

*You will have it, if you swear to the Rhine
wedding ring...*

LORELEY

And so be it!

I swear, as long as I get revenge...

SPIRITS OF THE AIR

*You will have revenge! But first
of the mystical union
perform the terrible ritual...*

*The nuptial wave of the vortex
makes you a final invitation!...*

*Confide your tears to it
of the last pain,*

*and, by divine enchantment,
you are alive again.*

LORELEY

*Let him marry you, mystic
river, my embassy!*

I undress my speed...

SPIRITS OF THE AIR

The groom opens his arms to you...

LORELEY

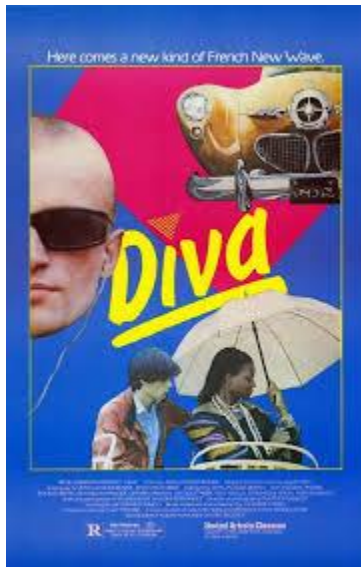
And so be it!

SOL EXTRA!

Here is the orchestral passage, "Dance of the Water Nymphs," from Catalani's "Loreley." The opera, by the way, was a drastic two-act reworking of a four-act version called "Elda," which premiered ten years earlier. If at first you don't succeed. . .

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

4.



As mentioned earlier, here is the aria for which poor Alfredo Catalani is best known today. Hell, he might have been forgotten altogether had it not been for the French hit-man thriller, "Diva," in 1981, in which the late Wilhelmina Fernandez sang "Ebben! No andro lontana" from Catalani's last opera, "La Wally." (Pronounced, roughly, "wuh-LEE.") The aria (which translates to "Ah, well, I shall go far away!") proves that a perfectly fine composer can occasionally write something transcendent, and step into the inspired realm of someone like Puccini. Here are the radically different contemporaries (and rivals), Maria Callas and Renata Tebaldi---each great in very different ways.

Synopsis :

Wally is in love with Hagenbach, despite his name. However, her father prefers that she marry his own friend, Gellner (despite his name.) Pops gives her an ultimatum : marry Gellner or get out. She gets out, despairing that she will never see her beloved home again.

Callas:

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

Tebaldi:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjt6uWILLol>

Translation:

https://aria-database.com/translations/wally03_ebben.txt

About the opera:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Wally

NOTE:

I was surprised that I much preferred Tebaldi here. I found it more involving, as well as incredibly well sung. Their rivalry, if I remember right, was largely manufactured by the press.

5.

Perhaps it is me. Or perhaps it is something as simple as same or similar key, or chord changes, but. . . every time I hear "Ebben, no andro lontana," from Catalani's "La Wally," I immediately think of "Se come voi piccina" from Puccini's early opera, "Le Villi" ("The Fairies.") Yes, the latter is more strident, impassioned, for sure, but there is a similar overall quality. And, though I hate to slight poor Catalani,

who was dealt a lousy hand in life, Puccini just obviously writes with such greatness, panache, gorgeousness. Here is Sonya Yoncheva in a concert performance. "If I were tiny, like you, a wild flower. ."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUoIX4uop30>

Synopsis:

Anna puts her bouquet from her engagement celebration in Roberto's luggage. He is about to leave to go to Mainz where he has been left a fortune. She hopes that he will think of her when he looks at the flowers.

Translation:

*Se come voi piccina io fossi, o vaghi fior,
If I were tiny like you, or a wild flower
sempre sempre vicina potrei stare al mio amor.
I could always be close to my love
Allor dirgli vorrei: "Io penso sempre a te!"
Then I would like to tell him: "I'm thinking of you!"
Ripetergli potrei: "Non to scordar di me!"
I could be able to repeat to him: "Don't forget about me!"
Voi, di me... piu felici, lo seguirete, o fior;
You, who are happier than me, will follow him, or flowers,
per valli e per pendici seguirete il mio amor.
in the vallyes and on the slopes, you will follow my love
Ah, se il nome che avete menzognero non e,
Oh, if the name you have is not lying,
deh! al mio amor ripetete: "Non ti scordar di me!"
then repeat to my love: "Don't forget about me!"*

6.



You should read the little bio of up-and-coming mezzo Aigul Akhmetshina (see link below.) It's pretty remarkable. She grew up poor in a remote village in the Republic of Bashkortostan. Right: where? There

was no piano at home, so she learned music on Grandpa's accordion, and took to singing so much that, as a kid, she became known around the village as "Aigul the Singer." As a teen, she earned money by waitressing and, of course, like most young people, stilt-walking. Then came an accident that forced her to re-learn how to sing. Seriously: read her bio:

<https://www.deccaclassics.com/en/artists/aigul-akhmetshina/biography>

She essentially startled the world, and critics, coming out of nowhere at just 21 with her Royal Opera debut as "Carmen." Here is this effervescent young woman and her luscious voice in a concert performance of the "Seguidilla" from "Carmen." A treat!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ayxraZx5vp4>

Synopsis:

Left alone with José, Carmen beguiles him with a seguidilla, in which she sings of a night of dancing and passion with her lover—whoever that may be—in Lillas Pastia's tavern. Confused yet mesmerised, José agrees to free her hands; as she is led away she pushes her escort to the ground and runs off laughing. José is arrested for dereliction of duty.

Translation:

[https://www.opera-arias.com/bizet/carmen/pres-des-remparts-de-seville-\(seguidilla\)/](https://www.opera-arias.com/bizet/carmen/pres-des-remparts-de-seville-(seguidilla)/)

What is a seguidilla?

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seguidilla>

Annnnd. . .WHERE is she from? Here:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bashkortostan>

7.

SOL highlight of the day. . .

Here is something extraordinary, the Bashkort folk song, "Nightingale," sung by mezzo Aigul Akhmetshina. It is the song nearest and dearest to this young woman's heart, having been something she heard her grandmother sing, as well as being beloved in her obscure Russian province, Bashkortostan. It is in the native Bashkort language. (Thanks, JK, for the tip.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DavKGqoBH-s>

Rough translation:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ai_bylbylyum

Here is more background on Akhmetshina, who seems well on the way to becoming the pre-eminent mezzo in the world:

<https://za.chartoo.com/apple-music/album/1747917255-aigul>

8.



"The Nightingale" (post # 7) put me in the mind of "Bailero," from the "Chants d'Auvergne," by Joseph Canteloube. Listen to both and you will see what I mean: they share a haunting, distant, deeply moving quality that evokes nostalgia, sorrow, yearning. Now, some works by great composers are written quickly, such as Ravel's "Bolero," and some take many years, the obvious example being Wagner's "Ring" Cycle. But perhaps Canteloube set the record with his "Songs of Auvergne," as it took thirty-one years to compile and orchestrate. Although this former banker wrote various orchestral pieces and one opera, it was his fascination with folk song that chiefly occupied his mind and inspiration. As he said, "peasant songs often rise to the level of purest art in terms of feeling and expression, if not in form." The soprano is Marianne Crebassa.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PkPKXU7G82k>

Translation:

<https://oxfordsong.org/song/ba%C3%AFI%C3%A8ro>

(Thanks to Chris Tombrello for noting that this is sung in Occitan, the language of the region, once favored by early troubadours. It is rather like Catalan and is still spoken today!)

9.

Okay, back to mainline opera, as grim and heavy and baritonal as it gets. Verdi's operas tend to explore twisted, impossible, doomed relationships---from the hunchback, Rigoletto, keeping his innocent daughter a secret, to Wurm's attempt to blackmail beautiful waif Luisa into marrying him in "Luisa Miller." Don Carlo centers around insomniac King Philip of Spain engineering a politically advantageous marriage to a woman young enough to be his granddaughter, hoping that she might love him, despite all. When he suspects her of having an affair with his son, it is too much. He wishes for a magic scepter that would give him the power to see people's true motives, and declares that the solution to his sleeplessness is. . .a tomb. This is "Ella giammai m'amò," or "She never loved me," from Verdi's later (1867) five-act work, "Don Carlo." The bass is László Polgár, singing in French (the language in which the opera was written.) Listen to the wrenching cello prelude. . .Philip's anguish, then later, his lyric resolve, heroic. . .and finally, with the return of that poignant cello, despair. (You might have to play this one twice. I did.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rqdf7H3DK80>

Translation:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ella_giammai_m%27am%C3%B2

SOL EXTRA:

Interview with 28-year-old sensation Aigul Akhmetshina.

<https://www.vogue.com/article/aigul-akhmetshina-carmen-metropolitan-opera-interview>

EXCERPT:

"When I was returning home from Moscow, I got in a car accident that nearly ruined my voice. I put all of my awards and trophies from singing in a box in the garage labeled "Aigul's Bullshit" and waited to apply to university the next year, maybe journalism or psychology. But my teacher said no way and we started again, rebuilding my voice."

FINAL BOW. . .

. . . goes to Aigul Akhmetshina, the 28-year-old mezzo with the wondrous voice, likely to become the greatest in the world. SOL was tempted to post more "Carmen," because it is just so goddamned good, but will instead leave that to you to seek out. Here is a 2019 performance of the challenging, tempestuous aria, "Acerba volutta," from Cilea's "Adriana Lecouvreur."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oU3xAvV14Cw>

Synopsis : The Princesse de Bouillon waits for Maurizio to arrive to their secret tryst. She complains of the pains love brings and wonders if he will come.

Translation:

*Acerba voluttà, dolce turtura,
lentissima agonia, rapida offesa,
vampa, gelo, tromor, smania,
paura, ad amoroso sen torna l'attesa!
Ogni eco, ogni ombra nella notte incesa
contro la impaziente alma congiura :
fra dubbiezza e disio tutta sospesa,
l'eternità nell'attimo misura...
Verrà? m'oblia? s'affretta? o pur si pente?
Ecco, egli giunge!
No, del fiume è il verso,
misto al sospir d'un arbore dormente...
O vagabonda stella d'Oriente,
non tramontar, non tramontar :
sorridi all'universo,
e s'egli non mente, scorta il mio amor!*

ENGLISH:

*Bitter voluptuousness, sweet torture,
very slow agony, rapid insult,
blaze, frost, thunder, frenzy,
fear, the wait returns to amorous sen!
Every echo, every shadow in the burning night
against the impatient soul conspiracy:*

*completely suspended between doubt and desire,
eternity in the moment measures...
Will he come? Does it forget me? is he in a hurry? or do you even regret it?
Behold, he comes!
No, it is the verse of the river,
mixed with the sigh of a sleeping tree...
O wandering star of the East,
do not set, do not set:
smile at the universe,
and if he doesn't lie, escort my love!*

OKAY, OKAY, HERE'S SOME "CARMEN," TOO. Horrid new Met production.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-RaudA1eWo>

SATURDEE OPRY LINKS ENCORE!

Aigul Akhmetshina and the blind Mexican tenor, Alan Pingarron, in a rousing and endearing performance of Agustin Lara's "Granada."

Mi cantar hecho di fantasia. . .(mine, too).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3KneeCMuWko>

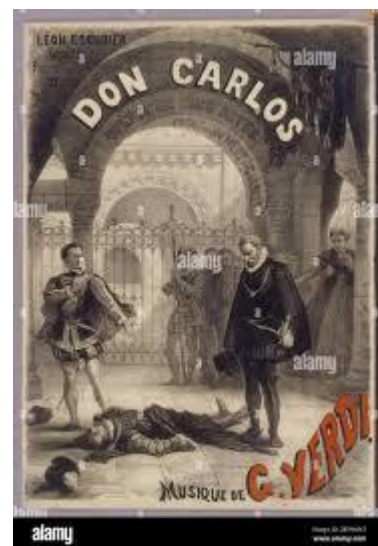
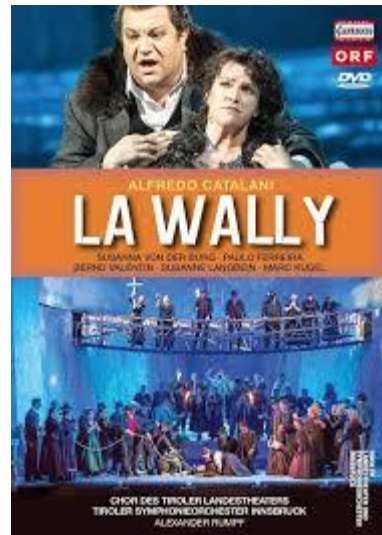
Translation:

<https://www.translatum.gr/forum/index.php?topic=16720.0>

(opera posters follow)



Lorelei does her stuff. . .

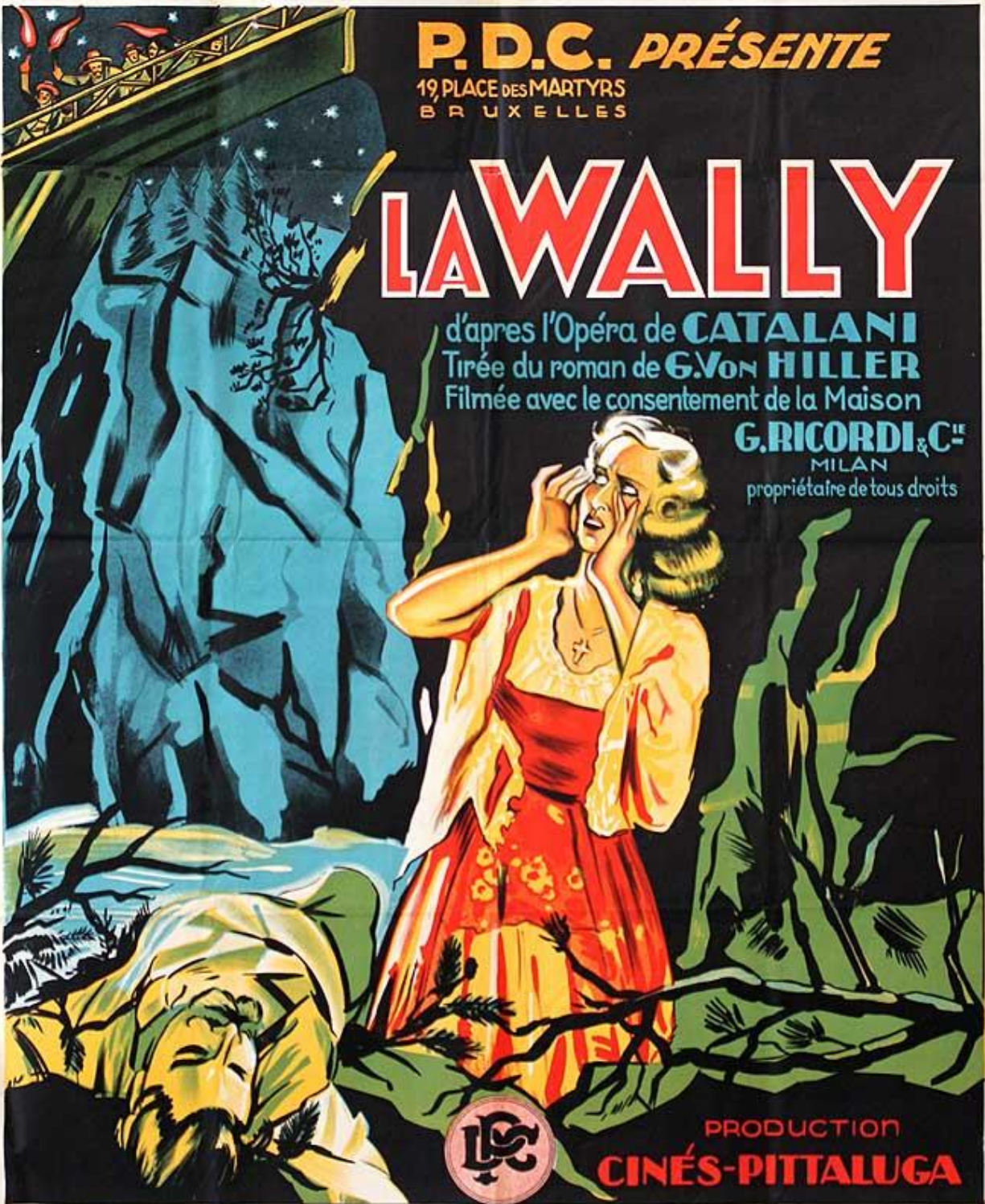


The evil faires in "Le Villi"





(more)



(more)

