

SATURDEE OPRY LINKS WILLY-NILLY EDITION/ Rip Rense

Saturdee Opry Links is yet again here, in your e-mailbox, for immediate deletion. But do so at risk of your own momentary diversion, for there are unusual items here, jumbled together by random choice. Harum-scarum, willy-nilly. You know, like life. Consider: a fire-breathing dragon, Willie the Whale, "Cinderperson," crazy patter, a lost Dvorak gem (with handmade puppets!), Luciano and Mirella, Jessye Norman, a man singing in a martini glass, and a hymn to the sun. You can't beat it with a stick.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCBdxxxR6MI>

Saturdee Opry Links Overture.

"The Dragon of Wantley." Yes, the 1737 smash-hit opera by John Frederick Lampe!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ntkq2xbTxg>



John Frederick Lampe



Tito Schipa



Cinderperson



Karolina Janu

1.



What? You have not heard of John Frederick Lampe? Or his 1737 opera, "The Dragon of Wantley?" Whither rock beneath hath thee hid? What? Well. . . It seems that composer Lampe probably---probably---set out to lampoon George Frederick Handel's serious operas of the day. Either that, or to poke fun at English audiences for rejecting Italian opera. Either way, "Dragon" was a big, fire-breathing howl of a hit in its time (yes, it is still performed), and Handel loved it, to boot. Speaking of "to boot," this is the way that the child-eating dragon is defeated by one Squire Moore---that is, after he downs about six pints of ale for courage. The inebriated squire, his fear vanquished by fermented hops, staggers up to the monster and. . .boots him in the ass! Here are three jolly little excerpts from this jape:

1. "Fly, Neighbors, Fly, the Dragon is Nigh!"

<https://youtu.be/MMcJEXAw71A?si=ZzWwBw7IX1hwkhLh>

CHORUS: Fly, Neighbours, fly

The Dragon's nigh

Save, save your lives and fly!

2. "He's a Man, Every Inch." In which one Mauxalinda decides that Squire Moore is the man to slay the dragon:

<https://youtu.be/saB-mSXo99Y?si=nn5E5g4Od2lGngOr>

He's a Man every Inch, I assure you

Stout, vig'rous, acve and tall

There's none can from Danger secure

Like brave gallant Moore of Moore Hall

No Giant or Knight ever quell'd him

He fills all their Hearts with Alarms

No Virgin yet ever beheld him

But wish'd herself clasp'd in his Arms.

3. "Let's Go To His Dwelling."

https://youtu.be/rdl1iAOUA6I?si=iC6Blw3m5kwJds_b

*CHORUS: Let's go to his Dwelling
With Yelping and Yelling
And tell him a sorrowful ditty!*

SOL EXTRA!



About "The Dragon of Wantley."

<https://operatoday.com/2022/07/dragons-and-slayers-a-new-recording-of-lampes-burlesque-opera-the-dragon-of-wantley-from-resonus-classics/>

Origins:

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

2.

In today's willy-nilly edition of SOL, we next turn to the honeyed, mellifluous, exquisitely phrased singing of the legendary Tito Schipa. Why? Because Pavarotti idolized him? Because he had a great name? Because he got so much out of arias without Herculean high notes? No, because at age 75, one year before his departure from this realm, he made a private recording of the aria from Giordano's "Fedora" entitled "Amor ti Vieta" ("Love itself bars. . .") Yes, that's right, folks, the world's shortest great aria, or the world's greatest short aria, take your pick. No, he is not at the top of his powers, by a long shot, but seldom has an aria been sung with such sincerity. Do I detect a hint of "farewell to the world" quality in this delivery? I think so.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6pydanrd5X8>

Synopsis:

Fedora has found out that Count Loris killed her fiance and swears to avenge his death. As the first step in her plan to capture Loris, she goes to Paris and attempts to get him to fall in love with her. Later, they are at a party at Fedora's house and he tells her that he truly loves her.

Translation:

https://www.aria-database.com/translations/fedora03_amor.txt

Just to give you a contrast as to how this aria can sound from a tenor at the top of his power. . .

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpcyCfUev9U>

3.



So SOL just wandered into the living room, and the evil television was tuned to a month's worth of free Disney fare. Now, most of this stuff is such sheer demographically pandering horror as "Frozen," but I happened to wander in when "Cinderella" was playing. Took me right back to my grandmother's blue convertible at the Paolo Drive-In in Costa Mesa, CA., inducing a tear or two. Such beautiful animation, unapologetically traditional storytelling, endearing characterizations. Couldn't do it today, of course. Cinderella would probably be called "Cinderperson," and have "agency" (what a phonebaloney *au courant* term) over her life, and, cough/fart/sputter. . . "empowerment." Ptui! Anyhow, this put me in the mind of. . . Cinderella. That is, "La Cenerentola," by Rossini, back in 1817 (that is before you were born, millennials, if you were confused.) Here is wonderful Fredericka Von Stade, known to friends as "Flicka" (my friend Flicka!), with the conclusion of the opera---the sequence of "Nacqui all'affanno. . . Non più mesta." As we know, she lived happily ever after with her prince. With English subtitles, in a somewhat updated production. (Start at 2:24:20.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SeVezYX1m6M>

Synopsis:

Now married to Prince Ramiro, Cenerentola asks her husband to grant a pardon to her evil stepfather (in Rossini's version) and stepsisters. She goes on to sing that her life has been transformed by love---quick as lightning, and that she forgives all who wronged her before, and now wants only to embrace them. Now THAT is a fairy tale!

Translation:

https://lyricstranslate.com/en/non-pi%C3%B9-mesta-no-longer-sad.html?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMATAAR3LrE4C7BqH0koiZLvHAiBLNCHuAGfWU8JRBUGubgjIno5tMuZDFyu9-dc_aem_kVnSEbR-qtRC87sC6NFkAw

4.

There is some manic, frenetic, frantic, but always winningly melodic fare from in Rossini's "La Cenerentola," and nothing is more manic, frenetic, frantic than the patter duet/quartet, "Zitto Zitto (piano piano)" in act one. (Talk about willy-nilly opera.) In essence, Prince Ramiro and his valet (sometimes disguised as Prince Ramiro) are crazy-zany plotting to find "the most beautiful girl in the land." It hardly matters whether you know what is happening---this is just plain fun. Here is that

sequence in two examples: first a colorful production from Barcelona with Juan Diego Florez and Joyce Di Donato, and one from the excellent small company, Queen City Opera, in Cincinnati. The latter has English subtitles!

1. Barcelona.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81AX_LSKrCk

2. Queen City. (Complete---start at 1:17:00.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8nDsYxAI7Y>

Translation (sort of):

https://www.opera-arias.com/rossini/la-cenerentola/zitto-zitto-piano-piano/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMATAAR06xNgSc905xoQPkdmm94uhb5AqHBXBQGTUUpfhuYcsz9Jjz3xMB16Q8HY_aem_z6y_QzF9oXfM8TU2dNINeQ

5.



I tried, in keeping with the theme of today, to open the new Opera Magazine at random, and excerpt the first opera I found. But it was Gluck (baroque), and I'm not in the mood. I thumbed three more times, and each time found a lousy or unknown contemporary opera, and frankly, the odds of entertainment value there are not high. So. . . I picked up a different magazine, a ten-year-old Opera News, and the first title I found was one I had never heard of: Dvorak's "The Spectre's Bride." Now, this is technically a cantata, not an opera, but it is lively, very beautiful, symphonic, with vigorous choral passages. A semi-lost, or unjustly overlooked, little item. Here, believe it or not, is a full 28-minute version done entirely with hand-made puppets!

Synopsis:

Based on a Czech folktale, it tells the story of a bride mourning her absent lover, abducted for a wild night's adventures---including a betrothal to her lover's ghost.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hcly3_aHud0

ABOUT the puppet maker, Francesca Borgotta, who works entirely with recycled material:

<http://puppetfigures.com/>

6.

Dvorak apparently loved his "The Spectre's Bride." Excerpt from a letter he wrote to a friend:

"I am delighted that my new work is coming along so well; I plan to finish the sketch this week and the rest should go like clockwork. I thank God that my guardian spirit hasn't abandoned me; and why would he, when I'm so fond of him. I think (and you'll see I'm not deceiving myself) that this work surpasses all my others in every respect, including Stabat. But I ask you not to mention this to anyone, I wouldn't want people to think I'm blowing my own trumpet! – you know me."

Well. All the more remarkable given how the work is just about forgotten today, certainly subsumed by the fame lavished on "Rusalka." And speaking of "Rusalka," there is a solo for soprano in "The Spectre's Bride" that would seem to foreshadow "Rusalka's" beloved "Song to the Moon" aria. It is "Prayer to the Virgin," and begins here at about 13:30 (with English subtitles.) "Maria Panno, při mně stůj."

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hcly3_aHud0

Also sung here by Czech soprano Karolina Janu:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7ulxmUqQKo>

About Ms. Janu:

<https://en.karolinajanu.com/biography>

About "The Spectre's Bride:"

<https://www.antonin-dvorak.cz/en/work/the-spectres-bride/>

7.



Mirella and Luciano

Just turned willy-nilly to another page in an old issue of Opera News, before it was ruined by "woke" pandering, dumbing down, glamming up. Or rather, when it was on the cusp of this sad transition (it's defunct now, as a result of such terrible judgement.) And there, of all things seemingly preposterous, was an interview with Ron Howard! Right. Ronnie. Opie. Huh? Oh, yeah, forgot---Ronnie did a film bio of Luciano Pavarotti, didn't he. . .Well, that's certainly to his credit, and I hope it was better than the travesty he did about The Beatles' live performances, which was every bit as deep as a sidewalk puddle, and "boasted" faked cobbled-together performances (without acknowledgement), to boot. Yech. But here's a little quote from Ronnie about Pavarotti, anyhow: "Luciano was well known for saying that he would want there to be opera on the moon if we were ever to live there." Well. . .here is, quite probably, the worst, dumbest, most pretentious, silly, and otherwise worthless staging of an opera in history. And yes, though it was not what Pavarotti had in mind, it is opera on the moon. A preview:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38zmrBqMCWO>

And now on to more earthbound operatic matters, though still moon-related. Here is the definitive "Mimi" from Puccini's "La Boheme," Mirella Freni, in concert with her childhood friend, young Luciano,

way back in 1965! First is "Mi Chiamano Mimi," followed by the duet, "O Soave Fanciulla," or "O Beautiful Moonlit Girl."

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

Translation:

"Mi Chiamano Mimi:"

https://www.aria-database.com/translations/boheme2_simi.txt

"O Soave Fanciulla:"

https://sites.google.com/site/edwardlein/Home/translations/puccini-soave-fanciulla?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAAR24I_eVlih1owgEbUzENIOcJxB6_zhdv4PBfpV-Tn8KwvhhH-hqeKlpQOo_aem_zYWVStMXoP9U1PUF8xlgPQ

Synopsis:

Rodolfo, a poor poet, meets his neighbor, the sickly and lonely Mimi, late on Christmas Eve. She introduces herself, they fall in love. Trouble ensues.

8.



Norman/Ariadne

Okay, turned to another page from Opera News, and . . .

Richard Strauss's "Ariadne auf Naxos" is neither fish nor fowl, part "commedia dell'arte" and part "opera seria." Why? It started out as incidental music for a Hugo von Hofmannsthal adaptation of a Moliere farce, but the incidental music became more than incidental in Strauss's imagination, and grew. Until it was an opera based entirely on the Greek myth. You know the story. It's basically. . .uh. . .oh. . .booze to the rescue!

Here:

Ariadne, who has been abandoned by Theseus, laments her lost love and yearns for death. Zerbinetta and her four companions from the commedia dell'arte troupe attempt to cheer Ariadne by singing and dancing, but without success. Zerbinetta insists that the best way to cure a broken heart is to find another love. Each of the four commedia men pursues Zerbinetta. Naiad, Dryad and Echo announce the arrival of a stranger. Ariadne assumes it is the messenger of death, but in fact it is Bacchus, who falls instantly in love with Ariadne. As Ariadne and Bacchus celebrate their love, Zerbinetta claims that she was right all along.

Here is the late, great Jessye Norman with an exquisite rendering of the gripping and beautiful, "Ein Schönes War:"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRr5AyUk9Hg>

Translation:

ARIADNE

*Ein Schönes war, hiess Theseus - Ariadne
Und ging im Licht und freute sich des Lebens!
Warum weiss ich davon? ich will vergessen!
Dies muss ich nur noch finden: es ist Schmach
Zerrüttet sein, wie ich!
Man muss sich schütteln: ja, dies muss ich finden:
Das Mädchen, das ich war!
Jetzt hab' ich's - Götter! dass ich's nur behalte!
Den Namen nicht - der Name ist verwachsen
Mit einem anderen Namen, ein Ding wächst
So leicht ins andere, wehe!*

ENGLISH:

ARIADNE

*A beautiful one was called Theseus - Ariadne
And walked in the light and enjoyed life!
Why do I know about this? I want to forget!
I just have to find this: it is a disgrace
Be broken like me!
You have to shake yourself: yes, I have to find this:
The girl that I was!
Now I've got it - gods! that I just keep it!
Not the name - the name is overgrown
By any other name, a thing grows
So easily into the other, woe!*

9.



Bacchus

Like I said in post # 8, the climax of the 1912 opera, "Ariadne auf Naxos," by Richard Strauss, is, more or less, booze to the rescue. Okay, that's a bit of a simplification. I guess you would say, uh. . .agriculture, fertility, and wine to the rescue. For these are the three things represented by the god, Bacchus, certainly with hedonism implied. At the climax of this engrossing work, Bacchus's voice is heard in the

distance ("Circe, kannst du mich hören?" Circe, can you hear me?), and Ariadne prepares to greet her visitor, whom she believes to be Death. At first, she mistakes him for her departed beloved, Theseus, returning to take her with him, but Bacchus proclaims otherwise. This is a downright silly production--- but with great singing and playing---with tenor Thomas Ruud in the martini glass, and terrific Lise Davidsen as Ariadne.

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

Translation:

(Go to the bottom of page 68, search for "Circe, Circe," and start there.)

<https://www.chandos.net/chanimages/Booklets/CH3168.pdf>

FINAL BOW:



Our willy-nilly edition of SOL ends with---what else?---Willie, The Operatic Whale! Need I say more? That's baritone Nelson Eddy, folks, doing the narration and all voices. The montage sequences include Leoncavallo's "Il Pagliacci," Wagner's "Tristan and Isolde," and Boito's "Mephistopheles." Aside from the performances by Willie, other operatic leitmotifs are heard through the short, including three by Wagner: the "Ride of the Valkyries" and the "Magic Fire Music" from Die Walküre, and the motif of the Ring from the four-opera "Ring cycle." Willie sings, among other things, "Shortnin' Bread," "Largo al factotum" from Rossini's "The Barber of Seville," all three male voices in the first part of the Sextet from Donizetti's, "Lucia di Lammermoor," and "Mag der Himmel Euch Verbegen" from Friedrich Wilhelm Riese's opera, "Martha." Take it away, Willie.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yp-1R1LX_qU

(By the way, this segment was originally part of the Disney movie, "Make Mine Music," a montage of musical sequences of many genres. Here is a link to the full movie:

<https://youtu.be/1D9JzQnvb8g?si=PF7GhC6cuHu5hdKY>)

(more)

Saturdee Opry Links ENCORE:



Munch: "The Sun." 1911

Given the advent of summer heat, here is the spectacular "Sun Chorus," "Inno del Sole," from the opening of Mascagni's opera, "Iris."

As it can look on stage:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zK0yQNmGiU>

Or, if you'd prefer a concert performance. . .

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOvBvxc7jd0>

About the opera:

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

Translation:

Son Io! Son Io la Vita!

Son la Beltà infinita,

la Luce ed il Calor.

Amate, o Cose! dico:

Sono il Dio novo e antico,

son l'Amor!

Per me gli augeli han canti,

I fior profumi e incanti,

profumi i fior,

l'albe il color di rose,

e palpiti le cose.

Per me han profumi

e incanti i fior.

IL SOLE APPARE

Dei Mondi Io la Cagione;

dei Cieli Io la Ragione!

Uguale Io scendo ai Re,

si come a te, mousmè! ecc.

Pietà è l'essenza mia,

eterna Poesia, Amor!

IL GIORNO SPUNTA

Calore, Luce, Amor! Amor!

IRIS

Ho fatto un triste sogno pauroso,

*un sogno tutto pieno di
draghi, mostri,
volanti chimere
e di striscianti colubri.
(Scende lentamente nel
piccolo giardino.)
S'era malata la mia amica bambola,
ond'io, tutta piangente,
l'avevo posta in giardino a riposare
entro un cespo di rose.*

ENGLISH:

*It is I! I am Life!
I am infinite Beauty,
Light and Warmth.
Oh earthly things! Love one another I say:
I am the new god and the one god.
I am Love!
Through me the birds have song,
The flowers, fragrance and magic.
The fragrance of the flowers,
the dawn's rosy color,
and all things pulsate with life.
Through me the flowers have their fragrance
and magic.*

THE DAWNING OF THE SUN

*I am the source of all worlds.
Of the skies I am the reason!
I rise both upon kings
as well as upon you, young girl!
Pity is my essence,
eternal poetry, love!*

THE DAY DAWNS

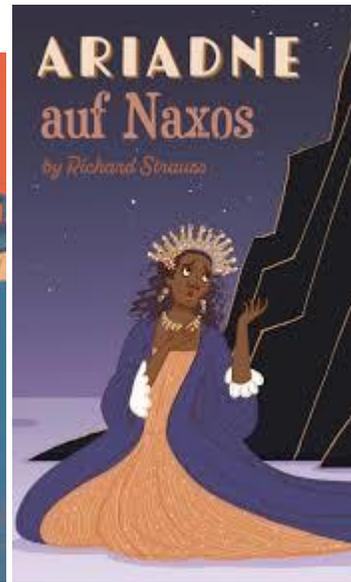
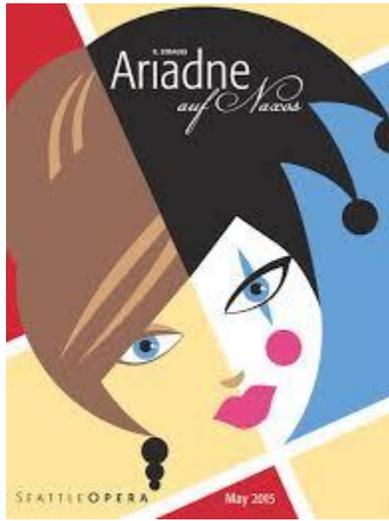
Warmth, Light, Love! Love!

<https://youtu.be/ZQKfnNwmTiY?si=11GzBggi3B8X9zaZ>

Or, if you'd prefer to watch a performance. . .

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOvBvxc7jd0>

(more)





THE DRAGON OF WANTLEY
HIS TALE: BY OWEN WISTER
ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN STEWARDSON