

DI STEFANO OPERATIC RECITAL

SIDE 1

Colpito qui m'avete . . . Un dì, all' azzurro spazio	(Giordano; Andrea Chénier)
Come un bel dì di maggio	(Giordano; Andrea Chénier)
Recondita armonia	(Puccini; Tosca)
E lucevan le stelle	(Puccini; Tosca)
Non piangere Liù	(Puccini; Turandot)
Nessun dorma!	(Puccini; Turandot)

SIDE 2

Pourquoi me réveiller	(Massenet; Werther)
Instant charmant . . . En fermant les yeux (Le rêve)	(Massenet; Manon)
La fleur que tu m'avais jetée	(Bizet; Carmen)
Quel trouble . . . Salut! demeure	(Gounod; Faust)
De mon amie	(Bizet; The Pearl Fishers)

GIUSEPPE DI STEFANO

with the TONHALLE ORCHESTRA, ZURICH,

conducted by

FRANCO PATANÉ

SIDE No. 1

1. **COLPITO QUI M'AVETE . . . UN DÌ, ALL' AZZURRO SPAZIO (IMPROVVISO)** *Andrea Chénier, Act 1, (Giordano; Illica)*

The time is just before the French Revolution, the place, a chateau ballroom before a ball. The guests arrive, among them Chénier the poet, between whom and the daughter of the house, Madeleine, a love affair will later develop. At her request he recites to the company, but his song is an indictment of the *ancien régime*. "One day I gazed at the boundless blue sky", he sings, contrasting the abundance of earth with the penury of most men.

2. **COME UN BEL DÌ DI MAGGIO** *Andrea Chénier, Act 4, (Giordano; Illica)*

Chénier ends as a victim of the Revolution he once favoured. He waits for the tumbril with his friend Roucher, who had tried to get him to escape, and who now asks him to recite his last poem. Chénier compares his death to the end of a day in May. Then Madeleine comes in to die with him, having changed places with a condemned woman.

3. **RECONDITA ARMONIA** *Tosca, Act 1, (Puccini; Giacosa, Illica)*

Cavaradossi is painting a Madonna in the Church of Sant' Andrea della Valle, to the horror of the sacristan, who recognises a portrait of a stranger, the Marchesa Attavanti, who has often come to pray in the church recently. In answer to the sacristan's shocked objections, Cavaradossi takes a miniature of Tosca from his pocket and compares her dark beauty with the fair beauty of the Marchesa. "Strange harmony of contrasts!" he exclaims. "Both are lovely, but my only thought, Tosca, is of you".

4. **E LUCEVAN LE STELLE** *Tosca, Act 3, (Puccini; Giacosa, Illica)*

For sheltering the political refugee Angelotti at his villa, Cavaradossi is sentenced to death by Scarpia, the notorious Chief of Police. Tosca has agreed to give herself to Scarpia in exchange for her lover's life, but the moment she has obtained the reprieve she murders him in a fit of natural revulsion. She hurries to the place of execution where Cavaradossi is remembering the trysts he had kept with her "When the stars were brightly shining and the air filled with faint perfumes". For a moment the two are happy, but unfortunately it turns out that Scarpia has tricked them once again.

5. **NON PIANGERE LIÙ** *Turandot, Act 1, (Puccini; Adami, Simoni)*

Turandot is that familiar type of princess who demands of her suitors the correct answers to three riddles or their death. Many have died cruel deaths in this way, but Calaf,

although he is in a precarious political position, is willing to risk it on seeing her. His father, the exiled King of Tartary, is also in Peking accompanied by the slave Liù, who loves Calaf and shows an Antigone-like devotion throughout. Willing to risk death for Calaf's sake, she weeps when he wishes to risk death for Turandot's: "Do not cry, Liù," says he.

6. **NESSUN DORMA!** *Turandot, Act 3 (Puccini; Adami, Simoni)*

Calaf has answered the riddles, but Turandot is so angry that she begs the Emperor not to wed her to this stranger prince. But the Emperor is bound by oath and cannot agree. To smooth things over, Calaf offers his life if she can guess his name by morning. So the heralds announce that "none shall sleep" until dawn, unless his name is discovered. The people tremble for their lives, and Ping, Pong and Pang, royal officials, try to persuade him to escape. Calaf takes up the cry of "nessun dorma" in a beautiful aria, saying that only he can tell his name, which he will do in the morning, when claiming Turandot. This aria remains supreme in the opera, for Puccini died before he could write his projected love duet for Calaf and Turandot.

SIDE No. 2.

1. **POURQUOI ME RÉVEILLER** *Werther, Act 3 (Massenet; Blau, Milliet)*

The sentimentality of this story, which is taken from Goethe's novel, has to some extent prevented its being more popular; which is a pity in view of the sweetness of its melody. Werther and Charlotte love each other, but she weds Albert, for some reason. Soon, however, she realises that she loves Werther after all, and he visits her, in spite of himself, imploring her not to awaken poignant memories in him. But Albert returns, and Werther shoots himself.

2. **INSTANT CHARMANT . . . EN FERMANT LES YEUX** *Manon, Act 2 (Massenet; Meilhac, Gille)*

Massenet's "Manon" is better known, and Prévost's heroine, torn between a luxurious promiscuity and her love for des Grieux, comes over very well. Des Grieux met Manon at an inn when she was on her way to a convent and persuaded her to elope with him. By the second act, however, Manon's cousin has tracked them down, and seduces Manon back with the lure of a rich man, de Bretigny. It is arranged that des Grieux should be removed. Before this happens, there is a charming scene in which Manon bids goodbye to her new home, and des Grieux enters, describing her as he saw her in a dream.

3. **LA FLEUR QUE TU M'AVAIS JETÉE** *Carmen, Act 2 (Bizet; Meilhac, Halévy)*

The story of Carmen needs little telling. José has been thoroughly wooed away from Micaela by Carmen, who taunts him with placing his duty to return to the army above his love for her. In a tender lyric strongly contrasting with her fieriness he tells her how he treasured her flower in prison. Zuniga, his captain, enters, and they fight for her. From now on the fate of José is sealed; he becomes a deserter only to find Carmen has lost interest.

4. **QUEL TROUBLE . . . SALUT! DEMEURE CHASTE ET PURE** *Faust, Act 3 (Gounod; Barbier, Carré)*

Only the love story of Faust and Marguérite is taken from Goethe, so that the opera is a romance rather than an epic. A vision of Marguérite is the method Méphistophélès employs to gain Faust's soul, and the measure of the devil's success the way in which Faust degenerates in his treatment of her. This exquisite aria accompanies Faust's first visit to Marguérite, and apostrophises her "chaste and pure" dwelling.

5. **DE MON AMIE** *The Pearl Fishers, Act 2 (Bizet; Carré, Cormon)*

"The Pearl Fishers" is a splendid example of the romantic penchant for flamboyant tragedy set in Oriental or otherwise exotic surroundings. In such operas the music has a rounded quality which stands for dusky warmth in the Western mind; one has only to think of *Aida*, *Lakmé* and *Turandot*. Leila, a virgin priestess, is brought to the temple of a fisher village to pray while the men are at sea; death is the penalty for the violation of her sacred oaths. Nadir the fisherman, however, has long loved Leila, and visits her after the high priest, Nourabad, has left. "De mon amie fleur endormie" is the serenade sung by Nadir while approaching the temple.