



# Franco Alfano

## Songs

**ANNA PIROZZI** soprano  
Emma Abbate piano

Franco Alfano (1875–1954)

Songs

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Anna Pirozzi *soprano*  
Emma Abbate *piano*  
Bozidar Vukotic *cello*

From **Sei liriche**

- |                                |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Perché piangi? *            | [4:08] |
| 2. Al chiarore della mattina * | [2:42] |
| 3. Malinconia *                | [1:43] |
| 4. Non partire, amor mio       | [2:36] |

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|---|--------|
| 5. <b>È giunto il nostro ultimo autunno *</b> | [5:45] |
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**Cinq mélodies, Op.1 \***

- |                |        |
|----------------|--------|
| 6. Sonnet      | [4:02] |
| 7. Pourquoi!   | [4:25] |
| 8. Rondeau     | [2:33] |
| 9. Envoi à *** | [3:04] |
| 10. Sonnet     | [3:11] |

**Due liriche per canto, violoncello e pianoforte \***

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|----------------------------|--------|
| 11. Preludio primaverile   | [2:52] |
| 12. Il giorno non è più... | [4:13] |

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|---|--------|
| 13. <b>Giorno per giorno (arietta per violoncello e pianoforte) *</b> | [3:09] |
|---|--------|

**Tre nuovi poemi**

- |                               |        |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| 14. Ninna nanna di mezzanotte | [4:04] |
| 15. Melodia                   | [2:53] |
| 16. Preghiera alla Madonna *  | [4:55] |

Total playing time [56:22]

\* *World premiere recording*



### Franco Alfano: Songs

When an opera composer turns his attention away from the theatre to concentrate on intimate songs for the salon it is perhaps not surprising that the results are imbued with the drama of the stage.

Franco Alfano is one such composer, a major musician and teacher who enjoyed considerable success with his operas during his lifetime, but who has been overlooked for decades.

That relative obscurity seems unfair. Alfano's catalogue extends to fourteen operas, several large orchestral works, including a piano concerto, numerous works for keyboard, and more than fifty songs, which he wrote throughout his long and eventful life. Indeed, he is generally regarded as the regenerator of the Italian art song. He wrote of his output that his songs were 'certainly not of secondary importance compared to the more complex operatic and symphonic compositions. I have always thought that a Lyric, a beautiful Lyric of course, is to a Sonata, a Quartet or a Symphony as a sonnet is to an epic poem'.

Born in 1875, Alfano trained in his native

Naples before embarking on an odyssey that took him to study and work in Leipzig, Berlin, Wrocław, Moscow and Paris, soaking up numerous musical influences along the way which he fashioned into a style very much his own. He embarked on a short-lived career as a solo pianist before turning to composition and teaching, only appearing in public as a song accompanist and chamber player. After a spell in Milan, in 1914 he settled in Sanremo, on the Mediterranean coast near the Italian/French border which was to become at least his summer refuge for the rest of his life. Teaching and directorships followed at the Liceo Musicale, Bologna and the Turin Conservatory, where he remained until 1939. He ran the Teatro Massimo, Palermo from 1940 to 1942, before being appointed professor of operatic studies at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia in Rome. From 1947 to 1950 he was acting director of the Liceo Musicale in Pesaro.

The songs recorded here offer a generous overview of his vocal output, from his Opus 1 *Cinq mélodies*, written in 1896 when he was a twenty-one-year-old student at Leipzig, to *Due liriche per canto, violoncello e pianoforte* from 1949, five years before his death. What is immediately apparent from this collection is the fast development

of Alfano's harmonic palette, his obvious facility as a pianist and his love of the work of a wide range of poets.

Alfano so impressed the Leipzig faculty that he was awarded his diploma within nine months of enrolling. He was justly proud that a copy of his **Cinq mélodies** found its way to Jules Massenet, who found them 'inspirational and worthy of praise'. The opening Sonnet, setting the words of Alfred de Musset, announces Alfano's natural gift for beguiling, flowing melody; 'Pourquoi!' has an easy waltz feel, with daring chromatic passages in the accompaniment; 'Rondeau' brims with passion for a lover, while 'Envoi à\*\*\*\*' is as delicate as the butterflies it evokes in Victor Hugo's text. Another de Musset Sonnet closes the set, again with an immediately attractive, exuberant melody.

The contrast between those early *Cinq mélodies* and the four numbers taken from **Sei liriche** could not be more marked. They span the years 1919 to 1922. By then, despite some failures, Alfano was firmly established as an opera composer, his *Resurrezione* enjoying more than 1,000 Italian performances in his lifetime and putting him alongside Puccini and Mascagni as an exciting verismo composer.

But his subsequent operas took different paths. His *L'ombra di Don Giovanni*, for instance, shows the influence of both Debussy and Richard Strauss, aspects of which emerge in this set of songs. 'Al chiarore della mattina' is operatic in its ambition, with an orchestral-scale keyboard accompaniment; 'Perché piangi?' broods with a richly exotic underpinning, while 'Malinconia' is a mere two pages, disappearing in a delicious Debussian haze almost before it has begun. 'Non partire, amor mio' sets the despairing words of Rabindranath Tagore, a poet Alfano returned to throughout his career, making several sets of songs and a large-scale piece for voice and orchestra.

I'm grateful to the American soprano Luvada Harrison for sharing some of her thoughts on performing Alfano's songs, drawn from her doctoral treatise *Lyric Art Songs for the Salon of Franco Alfano: More than a composer of operas* (Lambert Academic Publishing). 'I believe Alfano to be a text-driven composer,' writes Professor Harrison. 'He truly respects the work of the poets he chooses to set. His impressionistic use of tonalities, harmonies and his rhythmic setting of the poetry are atmospheric. The singer and accompanist

must form a strong bond when performing Alfano's songs because there is so much give and take – the pianist leads, the singer follows, the singer leads, the pianist follows – and then they have to find a balance of support between the voice and the piano. You can tell from the accompaniment that Alfano was a pianist. The accompaniments are challenging and can be quite difficult. He was also very clear with his marking regarding tempo and dynamics. His accompaniments rarely, if at all, overpower the voice.'

In 'Ninna nanna di mezzanotte' the first of **Tre nuovi poemi** from 1939, we hear the foreboding midnight bell chiming in the piano; a lovely rising figure features in 'Melodia', its accompaniment bearing the hallmarks of German chromaticism, a strong influence in many of Alfano's songs, alongside an impressionist sensibility that is thoroughly French. A beautiful translucence pervades the piano writing in 'Preghiera alla Madonna', a reverent, hushed setting of the words of Luigi Orsini that could almost stand alone as an operatic aria. The influence of Giacomo Puccini is never far away in this piece, which is natural, as the two were friends. Puccini would send Alfano copies of his compositions to review and Alfano would do the same with Puccini. They were both

published by Ricordi, and it was to Alfano that Ricordi turned to complete the final scenes of *Turandot* after Puccini's death in 1924, a process not without its difficulties. Puccini left hardly legible sketches which required a magnifying glass to decipher, and conductor Arturo Toscanini then heavily edited Alfano's contribution.

The words of Tagore return again in the second of **Due liriche per canto, violoncello e pianoforte**, 'Il giorno non è più...' from 1949. Alfano adds an attractive extra dimension in these two songs, the sonorous, atmospheric cello line underpinned by his most harmonically advanced accompaniment yet. In **Giorno per giorno**, a work for cello and piano from 1928, we appear to return full-circle to the apparent simplicity of *Cinq mélodies*, the cello intoning a folk-like melody which develops with double-stopping and harmonics. However, the sophisticated piano accompaniment transforms this naïve tune into something altogether more subtle and interesting.

One song stands out in this collection as particularly poignant. Miranda Bona's words for **È giunto il nostro ultimo autunno** are imbued with a lingering sadness that Alfano reflects so sensitively in his 1943 setting. In her research, Professor Harrison

found that Alfano left Rome in March that year and travelled north to his beloved Sanremo with his wife, who was struggling with a long illness that she would succumb to a month after their journey north. 'I choose to believe that Alfano was attracted to *È giunto il nostro ultimo autunno* because it described the lifelong relationship he shared with his wife,' says Professor Harrison. 'This song elegantly expresses the transition of life to death, the parting of two people who anticipate the reunion of their souls in the Elysian Fields. Although the key signature implies G minor, the tonal ambiguity of this *lirica* clearly illustrates the transition and instability of life and love.'

Alfano's reputation suffered in later years because of his willingness to be associated with Mussolini's Fascist regime, but in that he was hardly alone among figures in Italian culture at the time – Pietro Mascagni among them. Professor Harrison believes the songs of Franco Alfano – one of the most prolific Italian composers of the twentieth century – should be reappraised. 'The impressionistic compositional quality and vocal expressiveness of his *liriche* deserve to be programmed and shared with more

people. I sincerely hope that the release of this recording will introduce his songs to the next generation of singers.'

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*Stephen Pritchard writes for the Observer, BBC Music Magazine, Choir & Organ, International Piano, and the classical music website Bachtrack.*

## Texts & Translations

### 1. Perché piangi?

Perché piangi? Eppure non t'ho fatto soffrire!  
Sei triste tanto tanto!  
Io sento le lacrime tue fluire sul mio seno,  
ancora, ed asciugarsi al mio cuore.  
Forse volevi annegar l'amore nostro nel tuo pianto,  
perché non muoia della sua stessa morte:  
o non volevi forse darmi la rugiada del pianto tuo  
perché io possa rifiorire a l'incanto del tuo amor?  
Perché piangi? Eppure non t'ho fatto soffrire!

*F. De Lupis*

### 2. Al chiarore della mattina

Al chiarore della mattina  
due grandi occhi mi stavano a guardare.  
Mi volevan spogliare,  
per farmi eterna come una forma divina!  
Ma da una selva ombrata,  
io sentivo cantare,  
sentivo canti di tristezza,  
i canti della giovinezza che passa  
e lascia solo il rimpianto.  
Allora incontro gli corsi,  
gli porsi le labbra,  
gli porsi la mia bocca,  
e in quella malia ombrosa  
la vita sua, la mia vita volò.  
Come un incanto di vento  
nato da un'occulta armonia!

*F. De Lupis*

*Why do you cry? For I did not make you suffer!  
You are so sad, so sad!  
I can still feel your tears flow over my breast,  
and dry themselves in my heart.  
Maybe you wanted to drown our love in your weeping  
so that it may not die of its own death.  
Or did you perhaps want to give me the dew of your weeping  
so that I can revive the enchantment of your love?  
Why do you cry? For I did not make you suffer!*

*At morning light  
two large eyes were watching me.  
They wanted to undress me,  
to make me eternal like a divine form!  
But from a dark wood,  
I heard singing,  
I heard songs of sadness,  
songs of youth that passes  
and leaves behind only regrets.  
And so I ran up to him,  
I offered him my lips,  
I offered him my mouth,  
and in that dark enchantment  
his life, my life flew.  
Like the magic of a wind  
born from a mysterious harmony!*

### 3. Malinconia

Non so perché ricordare il tuo nome  
mi dia tanta malinconia!  
Vorrei prendere l'anima mia  
e spremela tra le mani  
per farne uscire un singhiozzo!  
Non so perché ricordare il tuo nome  
mi dia tanta malinconia!

Lilla Lipparini

### 4. Non partire, amor mio

Non partire, amor mio, senza avvertirmi!  
Ho vegliato tutta la notte,  
ed ora i miei occhi son pesanti di sonno.  
Ho paura di perderti mentre dormo!  
Non partire, amor mio, senza avvertirmi!  
Mi desto e tendo le mani per toccarti.  
Mi domando: è un sogno?  
Ah, potessi stringere i tuoi piedi col mio cuore  
e tenerli saldi al mio petto.  
Non partire, amor mio, senza avvertirmi!

Rabindranath Tagore

### 5. È giunto il nostro ultimo autunno

È giunto il nostro ultimo autunno!  
Tieni le mie mani nell'ultima stretta terrena  
e dimmi dove andrai.  
Non guardarmi con occhi tristi.  
Dopo l'estate della mia vita  
ci ritroveremo nell'eterna Primavera!  
Fuggi l'inverno quando io non ci sarò più  
per fondere il ghiaccio intorno al tuo cuore.  
Conserva il tuo cuore fra le rose profumate  
e cingilo con una rete di spine,  
chè nessuno lo tocchi.

### Melancholy

*I do not know why remembering your name  
makes me so melancholy!  
I would like to grasp my soul  
and squeeze it in my hands  
to get a sob out of it!  
I do not know why remembering your name  
makes me so melancholy!*

*Do not leave, my love, without warning me!  
I stayed awake all night,  
and now my eyes are heavy with sleep.  
I am afraid of losing you while I sleep!  
Do not leave, my love, without warning me!  
I wake up and stretch my hands out to touch you.  
I ask myself: is it a dream?  
Ah, if only I could hold your feet with my heart  
and keep them firmly on my breast.  
Do not leave, my love, without warning me!*

*Our last autumn has arrived!  
Hold my hands in the last earthly clinch  
and tell me where you will go.  
Do not look at me with sad eyes.  
After the summer of my life  
we shall meet again in the eternal Spring!  
Escape the winter when I am no longer here  
to melt the ice around your heart.  
Preserve your heart among the perfumed roses  
and wrap it in a web of thorns,  
so that no one can touch it.*

Quando verrò a te dopo l'ultima estate  
ne conterò i palpiti.  
Nessuno dovrà mancare.  
Andranno a due a due coi miei palpiti  
camminando con ritmo uguale.  
Cantiamo il nostro ultimo duetto d'amore.  
Raccogliamo le ultime rose per coronare il sogno.  
Io resterò ferma presso la fontana del bosco  
e ascolterò i tuoi passi allontanarsi.  
Ti volgerai per l'ultima volta verso di me  
e diremo insieme:  
'Arrivederci nell'eterna Primavera.'

Miranda Bona

### 6. Sonnet

Quand, par un jour de pluie, un oiseau de passage  
jette au hasard un cri dans un chemin perdu,  
au fond des bois fleuris, dans son nid de feuillage,  
le rossignol pensif a parfois répondu.

Ainsi fut mon appel de votre âme entendu,  
et vous me répondez dans notre cher langage.  
Ce charme triste et doux, tant aimé d'un autre âge,  
ce pur toucher du coeur, vous me l'avez rendu.

Était-ce donc bien vous? Si bonne et si jolie,  
vous parlez de regrets et de mélancolie.  
Et moi peut-être aussi, j'avais un coeur blessé.

Aimer n'importe quoi, c'est un peu de folie.  
Qui nous rapportera le bouquet d'Ophélie  
de la rive inconnue où les flots l'ont laissé?

Alfred de Musset

*When I shall come to you after the last summer  
I shall count its beats.  
Not a single one must be missing.  
Two by two, they will move at the same speed  
with my own heartbeats.  
Let us sing our last love duet,  
let us gather the last roses to crown the dream.  
I shall remain still, near the fountain in the woods,  
and I shall hear your footsteps move away.  
You shall turn towards me for the last time  
and we shall say together:  
'Goodbye till we meet again in the eternal Spring.'*

*When on a rainy day, a bird passing by  
sends, by chance, a cry into a hidden path,  
deep in the flowery woods, in its leafy nest,  
the pensive nightingale has sometimes replied.*

*Thus your soul heard my call,  
and you answer me in our dear language.  
This spell, sad and sweet, so loved in bygone times,  
this pure touch of the heart, you returned it to me.*

*Was it really you? So good and so lovely,  
you speak of regrets and of melancholy.  
And me, perhaps as well, I had a wounded heart.*

*To love anything at all, is a bit mad.  
Who will fetch us Ophelia's flowers  
from the unknown shore where the stream has left them?*

#### 7. Pourquoi!

Pourquoi réveilles-tu sur ces cordes rebelles  
ces notes de métal et ce clavier de voix?  
A ton léger signal, pourquoi ruissellent-elles  
comme des flots de sons écumant sous tes doigts?

Pourquoi m'entraînes-tu dans ce torrent sonore,  
comme une feuille sèche enlevée à ses bords?  
Pourquoi le cœur pesant s'allège-t-il encore  
au tourbillon joyeux des rapides accords?

Qui t'a donné sur l'air ce merveilleux empire?  
A quel ciel as-tu pris ces divins talismans?  
Le secret de tes yeux à ton insu transpire;  
le feu de ton regard est roi des éléments!

*Alphonse de Lamartine*

#### 8. Rondeau

Fut-il jamais douceur de cœur pareille  
à voir Manon dans mes bras sommeiller?  
Son front coquet parfume l'oreiller;  
dans son beau front j'entends son cœur qui veille.  
Un songe passe, et s'en vient l'égayer.

Ainsi s'endort une fleur d'églantier,  
dans son calice enfermant une abeille.  
Moi, je la berce; un plus charmant métier  
fut-il jamais?

Mais le jour vient, et l'aurore vermeille  
effeuille au vent son bouquet printanier.  
Le peigne en main et la perle à l'oreille,  
à son miroir Manon court m'oublier.  
Hélas, l'amour sans lendemain ni veille  
fut-il jamais?

*Alfred de Musset*

#### Why!

*Why, on these rebellious strings, do you awaken  
these notes of metal and this clavier of voice?  
Why do they flow, at your slightest sign,  
as swells of sound frothing under your fingertips?*

*Why are you pulling me into this resonant flood,  
like a dry leaf washed out from the shore?  
Why does a heavy heart lighten again  
in the joyous whirlwind of rapid chords?*

*Who gave you such wondrous empire over the air?  
From what heavens have you taken these divine  
talismans?  
The secret of your eyes, without your knowing,  
is revealed;  
the fire of your gaze reigns over the elements.*

*Was there anything ever sweeter to the heart  
than to see Manon dozing in my arms?  
The pillow is perfumed by her charming brow;  
on her beautiful brow, I feel her heart is watching.  
A dream passes, bringing joy.*

*Thus the wild rose slumbers,  
holding a bee in its chalice.  
As for me, I cradle her;  
was there ever a lovelier task?*

*But now it is day, and rosy dawn  
scatters its spring flowers to the wind.  
With a comb in her hand, and a pearl at her ear,  
Manon runs to her mirror, and forgets me.  
Alas! Was there ever love,  
with no tomorrow and no yesterday?*

#### 9. Envoi à\*\*\*

Roses et papillons, la tombe nous rassemble  
tôt ou tard.  
Pourquoi l'attendre, dis? Veux-tu pas vivre ensemble  
quelque part?

Quelque part dans les airs, si c'est là que se berce  
ton essor!  
Aux champs, si c'est aux champs que ton calice verse  
son trésor!

Où tu voudras qu'importe! Oui, que tu pris haleine  
ou couleur!  
Papillon rayonnant, corolle à demi pleine,  
aile ou fleur!

Vivre ensemble, d'abord, c'est le bien nécessaire  
et réel!  
Après on peut choisir au hasard, ou la terre  
ou le ciel!

*Victor Hugo*

#### 10. Sonnet

Je vous ai vue enfant, maintenant que j'y pense,  
fraîche comme une rose et le cœur dans les yeux.  
Je vous ai vu bambin, boudeur et paresseux;  
vous aimiez lord Byron, les grands vers et la danse.

Ainsi nous revenaient les jours de notre enfance,  
et nous parlions déjà le langage des vieux;  
ce jeune souvenir riait entre nous deux,  
léger comme un écho, gai comme l'espérance.

Le lâche craint le temps parce qu'il fait mourir;  
il croit son mur gâté lorsqu'une fleur y pousse.  
Ô voyageur ami, père du souvenir!

#### Envoi to\*\*\*

*Roses and butterflies, the grave brings us together,  
sooner or later.  
Why wait for it, tell me? Don't you want to live together  
somewhere?*

*Somewhere in the air, if that's where your flight  
is cradled;  
in the fields, if it is in the fields that your chalice pours  
its treasure.*

*Wherever you wish! Yes, whether you are breath,  
or colour,  
radiant butterfly, half-full corolla,  
wing or flower!*

*Firstly, to live together! This is the right  
and true thing to do.  
Then one can choose at random, earth,  
or heaven!*

*I saw you as a child, I remember that now,  
fresh as a rose and with love in your eyes.  
I saw you as a toddler, pouting and lazy;  
you liked Lord Byron, great poetry, and dance.*

*Thus our childhood days were revived,  
and already we spoke the language of the elderly;  
between us, this youthful memory laughed,  
light as an echo, gay as hope.*

*The coward fears time because it brings on death;  
he thinks his wall is spoilt when on it a flower grows.  
Oh friendly traveller, father of remembrance!*

C'est ta main consolante, et si sage et si douce,  
qui consacre à jamais un pas fait sur la mousse,  
le hochet d'un enfant, un regard, un soupir.

Alfred de Musset

#### 11. Preludio primaverile

C'è un augello tutto solo  
su d'un albero nascosto  
nello squallido giardino.  
E insistendo nel suo lagno  
dice cose  
che comprendere non possiamo:  
è l'assiuolo?  
Poi si tace.  
Nel silenzio della sera  
dove il lagno s'è perduto  
è un sentor di cose nuove  
che lo spirito commuove  
mentre in ciel la messe d'oro  
spunta lieve.  
C'è un augello tutto solo:  
è l'assiuolo!

Luisa Cevdalli-Cavaliere

*It is your comforting hand, and so wise and so soft,  
that blesses for ever a footstep on the moss,  
a child's rattle, a gaze, a sigh.*

#### Spring prelude

*There is a solitary bird  
on a hidden tree  
in the shabby garden.  
In its continuous lament  
it says things  
that we cannot understand:  
is it the scops owl?  
Then it goes quiet.  
In the silence of the evening  
where the lament is lost,  
there is a feeling of new things  
that move the heart,  
while in the sky the sun  
slowly appears.  
There is a solitary bird:  
it is the scops owl.*

#### 12. Il giorno non è più...

Il giorno non è più,  
l'ombra scende sulla terra.  
E' l'ora che vada a riempir  
la brocca al ruscel.  
L'aria della sera  
è satura della triste musica delle acque.  
Essa m'attira verso il buio.  
Nel viottolo solitario non c'è nessun viandante.  
Il vento s'è levato,  
l'acque del fiume sono tutte increspate... Oh!  
Non so se ritornerò mai più a casa,  
non so in chi m'imatterò per via.  
Laggiù al guado, nella barchetta,  
lo sconosciuto suona sulla sua lira.

Rabindranath Tagore

#### 14. Ninna nanna di mezzanotte

Mezzanotte!  
Piega il capo sulle tue mani congiunte.  
Così dormiva Arianna. Povera Arianna!  
Mezzanotte!  
Inutilmente le tue mani  
per toccarmi tenterebbero il buio, farfalle cieche.  
Mezzanotte!  
E che più vuoi?  
Che più vuoi se t'è dato sentirmi vicino?  
Sol null'altro volendo, tu puoi non perdermi!

Cesare Meano

#### 15. Melodia

Cammineremo nel bosco io e te!  
Andremo a vedere la luna io e te!  
La luna nella gabbia dei rami!  
Ma c'è una cosa che non so dir, ahimè...  
Nella luna che splende sul fiume. Ahimè!

*The day is over,  
the shadow is upon the earth.  
It is time that I go to the stream  
to fill my pitcher.  
The evening air  
is full of the sad music of the water.  
It attracts me towards the darkness.  
In the lonely lane there is no passer-by.  
The wind is up,  
the ripples are rampant in the river... Oh!  
I do not know whether I will ever return home,  
I do not know who I will meet on my way.  
There in the fording, in the little boat,  
the unknown man plays upon his lute.*

#### Midnight lullaby

*Midnight!  
Rest your head on your joined hands.  
Thus slept Arianna. Poor Arianna!  
Midnight!  
In vain, your hands, like blind butterflies,  
would search in the dark to touch me.  
Midnight!  
And what more do you want?  
What more do you want if you can feel me  
close to you?  
Only by wishing for nothing more,  
you will not lose me!*

#### Melody

*We shall stroll in the woods, you and I!  
We shall go and look at the moon, you and I!  
The moon in the cage of branches!  
But there is something I cannot explain, alas...  
about the moon that shines on the river, alas!*



Sul fiume in mezzo al bosco.  
Come nel fischio del treno laggiù  
che corre alla città ove la luna... laggiù...  
si smarrisce tra le lampade!

Cesare Meano

#### 16. Preghiera alla Madonna

Madonna, io ti conobbi quando mia madre  
congiunse la prima volta le mie mani nella preghiera;  
e ti vidi nel volto di lei quando,  
raccolta sulla mia infanzia serena,  
celava in un mite sorriso la sua intima pena.  
E poi crebbi alla vita  
e invidiai la lódoma che spazia e canta  
e riempie del suo canto il Cielo.  
Ti chiesi allora una grazia:  
sciogliere un inno  
che avesse volo e tintinno per te, Maria!  
La grazia non venne mai.  
Passaron gli anni  
e mia madre anche passò.  
Ma tu con la tua tenerezza  
rimanesti consolatrice alla mia dura fatica.  
O palpito di gemme nella notte,  
o chiarezza dorata... la tua luce mi fu dolcezza!  
Così possa io un giorno  
trovarti in cima della percorsa via,  
tese le mani ad offerirti in dono  
fiore di puro Ciel, la poesia!  
E rivedere in te, dolce Maria,  
il volto di mia madre.  
E così sial

Luigi Orsini

*On the river that runs through the woods.  
Like the whistle of a distant train over there  
that rushes towards the city, where the moon  
is lost among the street lights!*

#### Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

*Blessed Virgin, I knew you when my mother  
first joined my hands in prayer;  
and I saw you in her face when,  
bent over my serene childhood,  
she hid her secret grief in a gentle smile.  
And then I grew up  
and I envied the lark that soars and sings  
and fills up the heavens with its singing.  
I then asked you for a grace:  
to raise a hymn to give you  
wings and resonance, Mary!  
The grace never came.  
The years passed by  
and my mother also passed away.  
But you, with your tenderness,  
stayed to comfort my harsh toil.  
Oh sparkling of jewels in the night,  
oh golden brightness... your light was sweetness to me!  
Thus may I find you one day  
at the top of the travelled path,  
with my hands outstretched to offer you as a gift  
the flower of pure Heaven: poetry!  
And to see in you, sweet Maria,  
my mother's face.  
Amen!*

*Translation of Italian texts by Emma Abbate  
Translation of French texts by Héloïse Bernard*

Photography: Charl Marais, Makeup: Roberto Mironi, Hair: Erzo Voipe



#### Anna Pirozzi (soprano)

Since her debut in 2012  
at Teatro Regio in Turin  
with *Un Ballo in  
Maschera*, Anna  
Pirozzi has performed  
on the world's leading  
international stages.

These include the Salzburg Festival in 2013  
with Riccardo Muti for Abigail in *Nabucco*;  
a role she has now sung over 100 times in  
theatres such as La Scala, Wiener  
Staatsoper, Arena di Verona, Berlin, Paris,  
Florence and Parma. She has performed  
alongside artists of the calibre of Plácido  
Domingo and collaborates regularly with  
conductors such as Antonio Pappano,  
Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Muti, Nello Santi,  
Nicola Luisotti, Daniel Oren and Donato  
Renzetti. She is regarded as one of the  
foremost voices in a wide variety of  
dramatic and *Bel Canto* repertoires, which  
has seen her acclaimed on iconic stages  
such as the Metropolitan Opera, Royal  
Opera House, Opera Bastille, Monte Carlo,  
Bayerische Staatsoper, Teatro Real, Liceu,  
among many others. In 2023, she took on  
the title role in *Medea* for the co-production  
between the Metropolitan Opera and  
Greek National Opera in Maria Callas's  
centenary year, receiving unanimous  
acclaim from top international critics.



Photography: Tomini Photography

#### Emma Abbate (piano)

Described as 'an  
amazingly talented  
pianist' by *Musica*,  
Emma Abbate enjoys  
a demanding career  
as a piano  
accompanist and  
chamber musician. Duo recitals have included  
appearances for the Mozart Society of  
America, at festivals and concert societies  
throughout Europe, and in the UK at the  
Aldeburgh Festival, Wigmore Hall and  
Southbank Centre. She regularly broadcasts  
on BBC Radio 3 and has presented an  
episode of *Inside Music*.

This disc continues her acclaimed series  
of recordings devoted to twentieth-century  
Italian vocal chamber music. Previous  
issues have included *Sera d'inverno: Songs  
by Ildebrando Pizzetti* with mezzo-soprano  
Hanna Hipp, and *Shakespeare Sonnets*  
by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco with baritone  
Ashley Riches. Equally passionate about  
historical keyboards, Emma has released a  
range of piano duet recordings with Julian  
Perkins.

Based in London, Emma is a professor at the  
Guildhall School of Music & Drama and a  
staff coach at the Royal Opera House,  
Covent Garden.

## Bozidar Vukotic (cello)

Bozidar Vukotic is the founder member of the critically acclaimed Tippett Quartet. He has performed throughout the UK, Europe, Far East and USA and has recorded an extensive catalogue of over fifty albums for EMI, Decca, Naxos, Signum, Somm, Vivat, Toccata, Guild, Dutton and Meridian.

He was principal cello of the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra for ten years and has subsequently been invited to play guest-principal with many of the UK's finest orchestras, including the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, BBC NOW, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and English Chamber Orchestra.

He is a professor at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Head of Lower Strings at the Junior Royal Academy of Music in London.



Photography: Thurstan Reading

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