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A Masked Ball



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“In *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Verdi can take his seat between the past and the future, saying: ‘Help yourselves; there is plenty for all your needs.’ ”

- An excerpt from a review written for *La Perseveranze* during the late 1860s by renowned critic, Filippo Filippi.

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Verdi's

A Masked Ball
(“Un Ballo in Maschera”)

OPERA CLASSICS LIBRARY™ SERIES

Edited by Burton D. Fisher

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a *Prelude*.....

to OPERA CLASSICS LIBRARY's

A Masked Ball

The central character of *A Masked Ball* is Sweden's King Gustavus III, assassinated in 1792. Gustavus was a mercurial and enlightened monarch, consumed by democratic ideals: a determined leader who was profoundly humanistic, and a resourceful populist and man of the people. But Gustavus was also ambivalent, continually struggling between good and evil; he wore various "masks" or disguises, which become the underlying essence of *A Masked Ball*'s story.

Gustavus's court was saturated with grave conflicts and political intrigues, dangers to his life and throne that he failed to address. In the opera story, he becomes consumed by his passionate love for Amelia, the wife of his most trusted and loyal friend: that illicit love unwittingly overpowers him, leading to shame, dishonor, and eventually the King's death.

OPERA CLASSICS LIBRARY explores Verdi's *A Masked Ball*, and features an insightful and in depth *Commentary and Analysis* that provides background of the opera and analysis of its characters, the *Principal Characters in the Opera*, a *Brief Story Synopsis*, and the *Story Narrative with Music Highlight Examples*.

The *Libretto* for *A Masked Ball* has been newly translated by the Opera Journeys staff with specific emphasis on retaining a literal translation, but also with the objective to provide a faithful translation in modern and contemporary English; in this way, the substance of the opera becomes more intelligible. To enhance educational and study objectives, the *Libretto* contains music highlight examples interspersed within the opera's exposition.

A Masked Ball deals with regicide, a topic that censors virtually banned from the stage during the mid-nineteenth century. This Opera Journeys *Libretto* of *A Masked Ball* attempts to recapture Verdi's original "Swedish" version, rather than the "Boston" version that Verdi substituted in order to compromise the censors; in some instances, the "Boston" names are retained in order to fit the musical cadences.

In addition, the text includes a selected *Discography*, *Videography*, and a *Dictionary of Opera and Musical Terms*.

The opera art form is the sum of many artistic expressions: theatrical drama, music, scenery, poetry, dance, acting and gesture. In opera, it is the composer who is the dramatist, using the emotive power of his music to express intense, human conflicts. Words evoke thought, but music evokes feelings; opera's sublime fusion of words, music, and all the theatrical arts provides powerful theater, an impact on one's sensibilities that can reach into the very depths of the human soul.

A Masked Ball is a magnificent operatic invention, a towering tribute to the art form as well as to the genius of Giuseppe Verdi, the inventor of music that seems unquestionably appropriate to the dramatic action and text.

Burton D. Fisher

Editor

OPERA CLASSICS LIBRARY

A Masked Ball

(“Un Ballo in Maschera”)

Opera in Italian in three acts

Music

by

Giuseppe Verdi

Libretto by Antonio Somma,
adapted from Eugène Scribe’s libretto
for Daniel François Auber’s opera,
Gustave III ou Le Bal Masqué (1833)

Premiere: 1859, Teatro Apollo, Rome

characterizations of humanity, and an exceptional lyricism appropriate to the dramatic action and situations. Verdi's creative art began to flower into a new maturity with operas that would eventually become some of the best loved works composed for the lyric theater: *Rigoletto* (1851); *Il Trovatore* (1853); *La Traviata* (1853); *I Vespri Siciliani* (1855); *Simon Boccanegra* (1857); *Aroldo* (1857); *Un Ballo in Maschera* ("A Masked Ball" —1859); *La Forza del Destino* (1862); *Don Carlo* (1867); *Aida* (1871).

As Verdi approached the twilight of his prolific operatic career, he was supposed to be relishing his "golden years." It was a time when the fires of ambition were supposed to extinguish, and a time when most people become spectators in the show of life rather than its shining stars. However, the great opera composer defied the natural order and epitomized the words of Robert Browning's Rabbi Ben Ezra: "Grow old along with me. The best is yet to be."

Consequently, Verdi overturned the equation and transformed his old age into a glory: "the best is yet to be" became his last two operatic masterpieces: *Otello* (1887), and *Falstaff* (1893), both composed respectively at the ages of 74 and 80. In terms of Verdi's oeuvre, these operas are unprecedented in their integration and fusion of text and music and in their internal, organic architecture; both are considered by many to be the greatest Italian music dramas and tour de forces in the entire canon. Verdi eventually composed twenty-eight operas during his illustrious career, dying in 1901 at the age of eighty-eight.

In 1857, Teatro San Carlo in Naples commissioned Verdi for a new opera to celebrate the Carnival season. In seeking a subject, Verdi's first inspiration was to bring Shakespeare's *King Lear* to the opera stage, an idea that had germinated for almost 20 years.

Antonio Somma, the poet-playwright-lawyer turned librettist, whom Verdi admired for his literary gifts as well as his patriotic sentiments, had been entrusted with the *Lear* project ever since his original choice, Salvatore Cammarano, died four years earlier. Nevertheless, Verdi canceled the project — not for the first time — presumably because San Carlo did not have the quality of singers he had envisioned for the opera.

Somma suggested the idea of reworking *Gustave III ou Le Bal Masqué*, a drama about the assassination of King Gustavus III of Sweden in 1792 that the French composer, Daniel François Auber, brought to the opera stage in 1833: the opera's libretto was written by the renowned Eugène Scribe, the French dramatist of some 400 theatrical works that dominated the contemporary Parisian stage, and the librettist for most of the French "grand operas" composed by Auber and Meyerbeer during the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1843, Scribe's libretto for *Le Bal Masqué* served as a model for Saverio Mercadante's opera, *Il Reggente* ("The Regent.")

The Scribe-Auber opera scenario suggests that Gustavus III's assassination at a masked ball in 1792 resulted from his espousal of excessive liberal reforms: in particular, the nobility feared the expropriation of their property and power. During that same year, the Reign of Terror had exploded in revolutionary France. Nevertheless, the subplot concerning Gustavus's secret love affair with his best friend's wife was Scribe's invention.

A Masked Ball's story about regicide plunged Verdi again into yet another battle with the censorship authorities. While the opera was in rehearsal, the political climate was revolutionary: King Ferdinand of Naples had just barely escaped an assassination attempt on his life, and simultaneously, in Paris, an Italian revolutionary attempted to assassinate Napoleon III, resulting in 8 deaths and over 150 injuries. Even librettist Antonio Somma was under police surveillance for his alleged participation in uprisings against the Austrians in Venice; fearing for his life, Somma ultimately wrote the libretto for *A Masked Ball* under a pseudonym.

Europe's mid-nineteenth century was a time of revolution and unrest. Napoleon had been defeated, and political alliances evolved from the Congress of Vienna (1813-1815); Europe's victorious monarchies reacted with renewed urgency to protect the status quo of their autocracies. The Enlightenment had awakened humanity to democracy and individual liberty, the catalyst for the French Revolution; Napoleon, who rose from the chaos of the Revolution, was determined to destroy the monarchies. But in the aftermath of Napoleon's defeat, the survival of the monarchies was threatened by ethnic nationalism as well as new ideological and social forces evolving from the transformations caused by the Industrial Revolution: colonialism, materialism, and socialism. More importantly, the masses were now awakened, their dreams of democracy the inspiration for stormy winds of change: the 1830 and 1848 uprisings were in truth revolutions threatening Europe's autocracies and the status quo; reform was continually in tension and conflict with revolution as Europe became convulsed by wars, rebellions, insurrections, and conspiracies.

In the nineteenth century — in Italy and in most of Europe — censors protected the authoritarian monarchies by dominating and regulating the arts. If the censors considered a work subversive, or if they perceived the ideas expressed a threat to the existing social and political fabric of their society, they rejected the work, prevented its performance, and/or forced changes. With twenty-first century hindsight and retrospect, it may be hard to understand this apparent paranoia, irrational fear, and pathological suspicions of heads of state, ministers, governments, and the church. Nevertheless, censorship was their means to protect perceived “truths”: that truth, a coefficient of their power; those cherished American freedoms of speech and press were virtually non-existent in Verdi's nineteenth century European world.

Verdi had many earlier encounters with censorship, and he was vehement in his opposition to any interference or compromise of his artistic freedom. In 1851, he composed *Rigoletto*, a story adapted from Victor Hugo's *Le Roi s'amuse* (“The King has a good time.”) The opera's original title was *La Maledizione* (“The Curse”), the story's main theme dealing with Count Monterone's curse on Rigoletto: a curse on a father that haunts Rigoletto throughout the opera, and the “cause celebre” that Rigoletto blames for the tragic disaster that eventually overcomes him. Verdi and his librettist, Piave, fought profusely with the censors, who considered curse themes antithetical and blasphemous: Verdi eventually acceded to the censors and *softened* the title; *La Maledizione* was changed to the opera's title character, *Rigoletto*.

Hugo's play and Verdi's *Rigoletto* portrayed the libertine escapades and adventures of the pleasure-loving French King François I (1515-1547): a crude, cruel, obscene, and despicable character. Even though the plot bore historical truth, it was politically incorrect to represent the nobility in such negative light and disadvantage: in the story, a royal is manipulated, and becomes the object of an assassination attempt by a crippled and deformed court jester. In addition, censors considered Sparafucile's Inn sleazy, having the “aura” of a house of prostitution; and finally, it was considered repulsive that Gilda was “packed” in a sack during the opera's final moments.

Fortunately for Verdi, the Austrian censor in Venice was a man named Martello, an impassioned fan of Verdi who venerated the maestro. Martello was adequately satisfied with the opera story's relocation from the Paris court of François I to the city of Mantua, and its substitution of the Duke of Mantua for the historic King François I, thus endowing him with the anonymity of an insignificant Mantuan aristocrat. The opera was renamed *Rigoletto* rather than *La Maledizione*, “The Curse,” and other demands were dropped: that Rigoletto's daughter Gilda be replaced by his sister; that Sparafucile's Inn be modified; and finally, that they eliminate Gilda's sack in the final act.

In the opinion of both Verdi and Piave, *Rigoletto* had returned from the censors safely, and without severe fractures: in effect, the story was now removed from the realm of French history to that of Italian fiction.

Indeed, two years later, for *La Traviata*, the censors fought Verdi viciously, considering it anathema to portray a courtesan on the stage. In addition, the “Libiamo” drinking toast in Act I was considered too licentious. But it was Alfredo’s outpouring of love for Violetta in Act I that prompted outrage and condemnations of blasphemy from the censors: Alfredo’s words, “Croce e delizia” (“tormented delight”) could also refer to the Christian spiritual symbol of the cross: “croce.” Verdi was urged to change “croce e delizia” to “pena e delizia” (“pained delight.”)

But in the end Verdi won because the Venetian censor was again his passionate admirer, Martello, the savior of *Rigoletto*. *La Traviata* returned from the censors, like *Rigoletto*, without severe amputation, and with inconsequential changes that in comparison were far less than those he was forced to make for *Rigoletto*.

In 1859, during the composition of *A Masked Ball*, Verdi’s battles with censors continued in earnest. The Neapolitan censors demanded considerable plot alterations: change the status of the king to a duke, and set the story in an earlier historical period. The censors made even more stringent demands: that Amelia become a sister rather than a wife; that the conspirators should not draw lots to select the assassin; and that the murder should occur offstage. Verdi became enraged, his angry explosions leading to official threats of fine and even arrest; but Verdi felt degraded and resisted compromising his artistic freedom. Nevertheless, rather than fit his music to a new libretto that would virtually be “written” by the censors, he refused to make concessions to the censors and withdrew the opera from Naples.

Verdi brought *A Masked Ball* to the Teatro Apollo, in Rome, where he felt the Roman censors would be far more conciliatory and less demanding than those in Naples. However, the Roman censors were as demanding as the Neapolitans; they insisted that the King of Sweden be changed to a lesser aristocrat in order to remove his aura of sovereignty, similar to the earlier demand that François I become the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*.

Verdi compromised and accommodated the censors in order to preserve his opera. The story was transplanted to seventeenth century colonial North America, a non-European venue with overtones of pre-Christianity, so that it could be presumed that witchcraft and the practice of the black magic arts were prevalent. With its story transplanted to colonial North America, King Gustavus III became Riccardo, Count of Warwick, a colonial governor for the English Crown. In the anxiety of the moment, no one searched for historical truth; the Crown never had a governor in the colonies.

The final accommodation to censorship was to change the names of certain characters: Count Anckarström, the King’s most trusted friend, secretary, and eventual assassin, became Renato; the sailor Christian became Silvano; the conspirators, Counts Horn and Ribbing became Sam and Tom respectively; and the sorceress Ulrica became Mlle. Arvidson; Amelia and Oscar remained, since their names lacked political overtones.

Musically and dramatically, *A Masked Ball* became one of Verdi’s most popular operas. It is only recently that the opera has relinquished its “North American” venue and has returned to its original eighteenth century Swedish historical context. As such, the story possesses more dramatic credibility, as well as less dramatic improbabilities.

King Gustavus III (1746-1792) succeeded to the Swedish throne in 1771, a time when political discontent and social injustices were poised to explode into one of the greatest transitions in western history: the French Revolution.

Gustavus III began his reign by introducing a multitude of reforms that were inspired by the Enlightenment: he abolished torture as an instrument for legal investigation, granted freedom of the press, amended the poor laws, and extended religious toleration. In addition, he was

successful in instituting extensive currency reforms, promoting free trade, and strengthening his navy.

The nobility controlled the Riksdag, or parliament: they expressed their fear of the revolutionary winds that were engulfing Europe since the beginning of the French Revolution, and had specific anxieties about government expropriation of property and loss of aristocratic power. As such, they rejected most of the king's reforms. Gustavus's efforts to mediate between contending factions of the Riksdag proved futile, and to counter the antagonistic nobility, he strongly appealed to the ever-increasing lower estates in the Riksdag: the clergy, burghers, and peasants, establishing a new constitution that severely augmented the crown's power, and at the same time, curtailed the power of the Riksdag.

Nevertheless, Gustavus became frustrated because he was still unable to control domestic affairs and pursue his enlightened agenda. Consequently, in 1788, he turned to an aggressive foreign policy, declaring war on Russia, the latter preoccupied in a war with Turkey, and therefore militarily vulnerable. However, treasonous activities by Swedish officers, as well as Denmark's entry into the war alongside Russia, reversed the king's fortunes; he ended the war with a brilliant naval victory and a skillfully manipulated peace treaty.

Although Gustavus's military successes enhanced his popularity among his people, his advocacy of liberalism was destined to create enemies and turn some subjects against him, particularly the nobility who feared losing their wealth, properties, and status. He was aware that plots were brewing against him, and occasionally visited a local seer named Mlle. Arvidson — the fortune-teller Ulrica in the opera — not because he thought that she was a genuine clairvoyant, but because she was essentially a conduit to court gossip.

Nevertheless, the Swedish nobility remained implacably opposed to him. A conspiracy of aristocrats was hatched by two noblemen, Counts Ribbing and Horn, both seeking revenge against the king because he had abrogated their privileges, appropriated land, and even was believed to have been responsible for the death of one of their brothers. They succeeded in winning Captain Jacob Anckarström to their cause, a disaffected and disgruntled friend of the king. In March 1792, Anckarström fatally shot King Gustavus while he was attending a performance at the Stockholm opera house: Gustavus died two weeks later. In the opera story, Anckarström joins the conspirators after he discovers that he is a cuckold, the subplot the fictional invention of Scribe for Auber's *Le Bal Masqué*.

Verdi, ever the idealist, adored the noble aspects of Gustavus's character, relishing the opportunity to inject Somma's righteous prose: in particular, the king's greeting to his audience at the very beginning of Act I: "Bello il poter non è, che de' soggetti le lacrime non terge, e ad incorotta gloria non mira" ("Power is glorious when it brings happiness to others, but it is abused when glory becomes its only goal.")

Gustavus was a charismatic and imaginative aristocratic ruler, who was immensely loved by the majority of his people: an extraordinary reverence during that volatile period of late nineteenth century European history. Nevertheless, his great legacy remains his cultural achievements rather than his political advancements: he was a devoted patron of the arts who greatly encouraged the theater in Sweden, wrote plays, and even collaborated on the opera, *Gustaf Wasa*. His court, famous for its culture and scholarship, founded the original Swedish Academy (1786), which has awarded the Nobel Prize for literature since 1901.

Swedish history lovingly endows Gustavus's reign with the sobriquet, the "Swedish Enlightenment." Unquestionably, Gustavus was a rare aristocrat during an era of great turmoil and transition, a benevolent and sympathetic man of ideals who was sincerely dedicated to liberalism and human progress.

Giuseppe Verdi was consumed by human ideals; the story of Gustavus III attracted him intuitively. Temperamentally, Verdi was a true son of the Enlightenment, possessed by his noble conception of humanity. He abominated political absolutism and deified human freedom and liberty, the ideals that ultimately became the leitmotif of his lifelong crusade against every form of tyranny: personal, social, political, or ecclesiastical. Certainly, each and every one of his early operas was a musico-dramatic manifesto for freedom and liberty. In particular, two of his later operas, *Don Carlo* (1867) and *Aida* (1872), if anything, resound with thunderous declarations of social and political idealism; in their subtext, they condemn the corruption and abuse of power.

The historical Gustavus III was enlightened, sympathetic, and benevolent. He possessed noble aspirations for humanity; in many respects, he was Verdi's alter ego. Coincidentally, Verdi composed *A Masked Ball* in 1859, a year in which Italy's liberation from Austria was imminent: Verdi was exploding with joy, relishing another opportunity to express his patriotic ardor. In Ulrica's cave, in the finale of the first act of *A Masked Ball*, the crowd acknowledges their king with a passionate and broad-sweeping patriotic anthem: "O figlio della patria, amor di questa terra" ("Long live the father of our land, reign happily, in glory and good health.") Like Verdi's earlier "Va, pensiero" chorus from *Nabucco*, the anthem represented another celebration of nationalism and freedom.

A Masked Ball is a tragic music drama that encompasses an entire geometry of human passions: love, duty, honor, infidelity, betrayal, revenge, and murder; in the end, its tragic elements are redeemed by forgiveness, contrition, and reconciliation.

The uniqueness of the opera is that it is textually a tragicomedy, a Shakespearean-style blend of tragedy and comedy; a synthesis of dramatic human conflicts that are lightened by ingeniously contrived comic elements. There are moments when the opera's dramatic tension interacts with capricious, lighthearted playfulness, providing a subtle blend of light and dark, or laughter with tears: a theatrical chiaroscuro. Verdi, the musical dramatist and narrator of the story, provides a musical chiaroscuro with its interplay of sudden mood changes and temperament; his musical language is at times ebullient, and at times grave.

Gustavus's characterization, textually and musically, reflects that chiaroscuro: he represents ambivalent humanity, his soul continually alternating between his light and dark side. He represents flawed humanity; he wears different masks, and continues to struggle between good and evil. The king is a multifaceted: an ambivalent personality who appears in each act of the opera bearing a different persona, his various masks, or disguises, becoming the essence of *A Masked Ball*'s story.

Verdi introduces Gustavus as a bright and mercurial monarch possessed by democratic ideals: an enlightened and determined leader who is profoundly humanistic, a resourceful populist and man of the people; that is the light, or good side of Gustavus, certainly an archetypal Verdian hero. Nevertheless, Gustavus's dark side struggles with grave conflicts: his court is saturated with political intrigue, and he is heedless to warnings of danger.

But Gustavus' tragic flaw possesses him: his passionate love for Amelia, the wife of his most trusted and loyal friend, an illicit love that has unwittingly overpowered him, and one which will most assuredly lead to shame, dishonor, and death. *A Masked Ball*'s primary dramatic themes represent a tension between love and politics: between emotion and reason. Gustavus becomes powerless and cannot reconcile the conflict within his soul: reason dictates that he must control his passions, but emotions have propelled him beyond reason.

At the very beginning of the first act, the venerated King Gustavus wears his heroic mask: he is benevolent, strong in his convictions, and profoundly loved by his subjects, his protection against lurking conspiratorial dangers. After Oscar shows him the guest list for the masked ball,

the king's light and carefree mood suddenly becomes somber: Amelia's name is on the list, causing him to erupt into ecstatic rapture at the thought of seeing his secret love again: "La rivedrà nell'estasi" ("I'll be in ecstasy when I see her radiance again.") The king's dark side has come to the fore, the mention of Amelia evoking his uncontrollable passion for her, and affirming that he is a victim of emotions that have surrendered to reason.

And suddenly, the mood changes dramatically when the king, the embodiment of justice and conscience, seeks truth and proof about the sorceress Ulrica/Mlle. Arvidson, whom the Chief Justice has condemned to exile. Oscar provides the contrast, or chiaroscuro, defending the sorceress with lighthearted and almost comic verve as he explains that Ulrica is far from wicked, and a magician with wondrous powers to predict the future: "Volta la terrea" ("Her eyes sparkle when she turns her gaze to the stars.")

Gustavus's decision to seek out Ulrica/Mlle. Arvidson in disguise confirms his belief that there is no problem that cannot be solved without the proper application of wit and daring, perhaps a royal incarnation of an earlier operatic hero: Figaro. The first act of *A Masked Ball* concludes with a collision of its light and dark elements: the king celebrates his forthcoming adventure by praising the pleasures of life: "Ogni cura si doni al diletto" ("Let's forget our cares and enjoy ourselves in the witch's den.") But, he is oblivious to the undercurrents of fatal murmurs from the conspirators.

The fortune-teller Ulrica (Mlle. Arvidson in Verdi's original Swedish version) is an austere, foreboding character in the story, her trancelike call to Satan a sinister evocation of the powers of darkness: "Re dell'abisso affrettati" ("King of the Abyss, hasten to me.") But very quickly, Gustavus lightens the tension, rewarding the disgruntled sailor, Christian, by surreptitiously placing a commission and gold in his pocket.

Amelia arrives at Ulrica's cave in torment and despair, seeking the sorceress's help to alleviate her uncontrollable yearnings and desires for King Gustavus, all of which she suspects will lead to doom and dishonor. Ulrica dutifully prescribes the antidote as Amelia prays for strength; Gustavus joins them and vows that he would gladly cede the throne for Amelia's love.

The somber mood quickly changes when the incognito Gustavus receives Ulrica's fatal prediction, the king immediately relieving the tension by laughing away her prophesy: "È scherzo od è follia" ("Your prophecy is either a joke or it is madness!")

In Act II, Gustavus meets Amelia at the terrifying execution fields outside Stockholm where she has gone to find the curative herb prescribed by Ulrica. At first, Gustavus confesses his love for Amelia: "Non sai tu che se l'anima mia" ("Don't you realize that I'm torn by guilt and remorse?") Amelia, equally unable to control herself, surrenders and confesses that she indeed loves the king. The lovers explode into ecstatic rapture: "O qual soave brivido" ("What sweet perfume soothes my aching heart!") Gustavus and Amelia have become victims of their uncontrollable yearnings and desires, both admitting that they are acting with moral weakness; both failing to control their passions; and both defying conscience and reason.

In the dramatic climax of Act II, Anckarström arrives to protect Gustavus from an ambush by conspirators, and later discovers that the king's veiled lover is none other than his wife: it is an explosive moment of transformation in which love quickly turns to hate. Anckarström entered the drama on the side of light; a man of trust and loyalty who was undaunted in his deep friendship and devotion for the king, which he expressed so eloquently in Act I: "Alla vita che t'arride" ("Your life is promising, full of joy and hope.") But Anckarström has suddenly become transformed by uncontrollable events: the dark shadow of betrayal. He becomes vindictive and vengeful, his love for both wife and king transformed into hate and the need for retribution through an act of murder.

Verdi exploits Anckarström's anguish in one of the most dramatic moments in the opera: his Act III aria, "Eri tu" ("It was you who defiled the soul of the person dearest to me"); it is Anckarström's crossover into darkness; a bewildered and tormented man is overcome by passions that compel him toward mortal revenge against his king and former friend. He explodes into deadly passion with outbursts expressing the dark side of hatred, while at the same time, looking back nostalgically to his love for Amelia and his loving friendship with Gustavus.

In the final act of *A Masked Ball*, the king finally realizes that he must surrender to reason and duty and place his higher responsibilities before personal happiness and selfishness; he must no longer continue his obsession with Amelia, which can only lead to dishonor and shame. Remorsefully, he finally acknowledges that he must give up his love for Amelia: "Ma se m'è forza perdeti" ("I must lose you for ever, my beloved.") Reluctantly and with obvious hesitation, he signs the paper sending Anckarström and Amelia to Finland as diplomatic envoys.

At the masked ball, there is a dramatic moment of unmasking. Amelia finds Gustavus, admitting to him that she wrote the anonymous letter trying to convince him that his life was in jeopardy, and that he should not attend the ball. Gustavus recognizes her voice and explodes in delight: "Invan ti celi, Amelia: quell' angelo tu sei!" ("You cannot disguise yourself from me, my dearest Amelia!") At that moment, both Gustavus and Amelia remove their masks, the king passionately telling her that his love for her is stronger than death.

Heartbroken, Gustavus tells her that he has ordered her husband to Finland, and then bids Amelia farewell: "Anco una volta addio, l'ultima volta addio" ("I must leave you, Amelia. Once more, farewell, for the last time, farewell.") As Gustavus turns to leave, Anckarström approaches unobserved, comes between them, and stabs the king: "E tu ricevi il mio!" ("And this is my farewell to you!")

The guests scream in horror, but the dying Gustavus dissuades them from their thirst for death, vengeance, and more bloodshed. He urges Anckarström near him, and swears before God that Amelia was faithful, admitting that he loved her, but that he never stained her name or his honor; he presents Anckarström with his promotion as envoy to Finland, and pardons Anckarström and all the conspirators. Gustavus's subjects praise their benevolent king; and then he dies.

During this final moment of *A Masked Ball*, Gustavus is unmasked and reveals his true inner soul: he was a paradoxical man torn between love and duty, and could not control his own instinctive desires.

Gustavus was a victim of a political assassination, and in the opera story, he rises to true nobility by condemning himself as the perpetrator of the crime, blaming his own misdeeds for his murder. As he died, Gustavus rose to greatness by finally confronting his ambivalence and faults, growing to awareness and conscience, and forgiving those who killed him.

Gustavus's tragic flaw was that he became the victim of his adulterous passion for Amelia: at the same time, he betrayed the noble friendship of Anckarström. Anckarström's misguided patriotism nearly brought ruin to Gustavus's enlightened society; nevertheless, the king's sublime act of forgiveness precipitated a reconciliation that may have saved his kingdom. In death, his enemies, as well as his loyal friends and subjects, grieved for the man they deeply loved: "Oh merciful God, save this noble, generous soul!"

Gustavus was the tragic victim of the drama, but the real victim of this story was love; the noble love of friendship, and the glory of marital love; both became casualties because passions overcome reason.

Principal Characters in *A Masked Ball*

Brief Story Synopsis

Story Narrative with Music Highlight Examples

*Principal Characters in A Masked Ball**Original Swedish version**Boston version*

Gustavus III, King of Sweden	Riccardo, Governor of Boston	Tenor
Captain Jacob Anckarström, Gustavus's friend and secretary	Renato	Baritone
Amelia, Anckarström's wife	Amelia	Soprano
Mlle. Arvidson, a fortune-teller	Ulrica	Soprano
Oscar, a page	Oscar	Soprano
Christian, a sailor	Silvano	Baritone
Count Horn, a conspirator	Sam	Bass
Count Ribbing, a conspirator	Tom	Bass

Chief Justice, members of the court, deputies, officers, sailors, and conspirators.

Time: End of the 18th century

Place: Stockholm, Sweden

Brief Story Synopsis

King Gustavus III greets a group of officers and deputies; also assembled are a small group of discontented nobles who are conspiring to assassinate the king; Counts Ribbing and Horn lead them.

The page Oscar presents Gustavus with the invitation list for the forthcoming masked ball: Gustavus erupts into joy upon seeing Amelia's name on the list. Gustavus has become consumed by his secret passion for Amelia, however, she is the wife of Captain Anckarström, his secretary and most trusted friend.

Anckarström arrives to alert Gustavus that although he is universally loved and respected by his people, there are malcontents who are planning to assassinate him. The Chief Justice presents Gustavus with a document banishing the gypsy sorceress Ulrica (Mlle. Arvidson) for witchcraft. To determine if the allegation is true, Gustavus invites the entire court to visit Ulrica's cave, but in disguise; Gustavus will be disguised as a fisherman. The conspirators express their delight, anticipating an opportunity to assassinate the king.

At Ulrica's cave, the sorceress invokes Satan. Ulrica predicts the sailor Christian's future, which suddenly comes about when he discovers a commission and gold in his pocket, both stealthily placed there by Gustavus. Amelia appears, desperately seeking a cure for her uncontrollable passion for the king, a relationship that she fears will result in shame and dishonor. Gustavus overhears Amelia's confession of love for him and becomes elated. Ulrica prescribes the antidote to solve Amelia's dilemma; a magic herb that she can find at midnight at the execution fields outside Stockholm. From hiding, Gustavus overhears Ulrica's instructions, and vows to rendezvous with Amelia that night at the execution fields.

Ulrica predicts Gustavus's future: that the first man to greet him and shake his hand will kill him. Gustavus becomes amused by the ludicrous prediction. Anckarström suddenly appears, approaches

the disguised Gustavus, and shakes Gustavus's hand, revealing the king's true identity. Gustavus pardons Ulrica. Christian reappears and leads the people in a hymn of praise to King Gustavus.

At the execution fields, Amelia appears just before midnight to pluck the magic herb. Gustavus appears and confronts Amelia: both are unable to control their passions and ecstatically affirm their love for each other. Approaching footsteps reveal Anckarström; Amelia veils herself so that her husband does not recognize her. Anckarström has come to warn Gustavus that conspirators lie in ambush and are poised to assassinate him. Gustavus agrees to flee if Anckarström promises to escort the veiled woman to safety in the city without seeking her identity. After Anckarström agrees, Gustavus escapes, disguised by Anckarström's cloak.

The conspirators arrive. As Amelia intercedes to avoid a bloody confrontation between Ribbing, Horn, and her husband, her veils falls; Anckarström becomes shocked to realize that his wife has betrayed him with the king, his best and most trusted friend. The conspirators mock the astonished Anckarström; he invites them to his home the next morning, and then drags Amelia off.

Anckarström is heedless to Amelia's pleas of innocence; only death can vindicate her betrayal. He accuses Gustavus of destroying his life and their love, and vows to kill Gustavus instead of his wife. The conspirators arrive, and in revenge, Anckarström joins their assassination plot. The murderer is to be decided by drawing lots. The returning Amelia is asked to draw the name from an urn; she draws the paper with Anckarström's name.

Oscar arrives to invite Anckarström and Amelia to the masked ball that evening. Fearing for Gustavus's life, Amelia sends him an anonymous letter that warns him that his life is in mortal danger, but Gustavus refuses to show cowardice, and relishes the opportunity to see Amelia again.

At the masked ball that evening, Anckarström manipulates Oscar into revealing Gustavus's disguise by convincing him that he must speak with the king about urgent matters of state. Gustavus appears, followed by Amelia, who begs him to escape, but he refuses. He tells Amelia that he has appointed Anckarström envoy to Finland, and he bids her farewell.

Anckarström steps between them and fatally stabs Gustavus. Gustavus proclaims Amelia's innocence and pardons Anckarström and the conspirators. Gustavus dies.

Story Narrative with Music Highlight Examples

The prelude renders two main musical themes: first, the punctuated conspirator's music conveying a sinister sense of malevolence and imminent danger, and then in contrast, a second theme that evokes King Gustavus's passionate love for Amelia.

Conspirator's theme:

Allegro assai moderato



Love theme:

Allegro assai moderato



Act I - Scene 1: Morning. A reception room in the royal palace in Stockholm, Sweden.

King Gustavus's morning audience is attended by army officers, deputies, noblemen, members of the court, and delegates of the people; lurking in the background are Counts Ribbing, Horn, and other conspirators waiting for a suitable moment to assassinate the king.

There is a profound sense of irony conveyed by those present in the palace: officers and noblemen praise their king, vowing earnest loyalty and praying that he has slept peacefully; but at the same time, Counts Ribbing and Horn are consumed by their obsession for revenge against the king's malevolence.

Gustavus arrives, and he is immediately presented with petitions for his review and signature. Oscar, a page, ceremoniously shows him the guest list for the forthcoming masked ball. In an aside, Gustavus expresses his delight that Amelia is among the guests; he bears an uncontrollable, secret passion for Amelia, the wife of his most loyal and trusted friend, Anckarström.

To himself, Gustavus reveals his compulsion and yearning for Amelia, expressing that he will be ecstatic if he can see her again.

"La rivedrà nell'estasi"

Poco meno mosso

GUSTAVUS



(La rivedrà nell'e - stasi rag-gian - te di pal - lore,)

(I'll be in ecstasy when I see her radiance again.)

At the conclusion of Gustavus's reverie about Amelia, ironically, Anckarström suddenly appears, anxiously expressing a sense of urgency; he has learned that mortal enemies are stirring, and there is imminent peril to the king's life. Gustavus disingenuously disproves him, refusing to believe that his life is in jeopardy, and further claiming that his loving subjects will surely protect him from any danger; after all, his popular support is now greater than ever.

Nevertheless, Gustavus forbids Anckarström from revealing any of the conspirators' names, avoiding being forced to punish them. Anckarström emphatically warns the king not to ignore these ominous signs: he must persevere to uncover his enemies because his welfare is too important to their country.

"Alla vita che t'arride"

Andante

ANCKARSTRÖM



Al - la vi - ta che t'ar - ri - de di spe - ran - se e gau - dio piena,
Your life is promising, full of joy and hope,

The Chief Justice presents documents for the king's signature, which banish the fortune-teller, Ulrica (Mlle. Arvidson); they believe that she is in league with the devil and practices witchcraft, and that thieves and murderers congregate at her cave.

Oscar intervenes to refute the Justice, and begs the king to pardon Ulrica. He defends Ulrica as a brilliant fortune-teller, whose prophecies always come true.

"Volta la terrea"

Allegro

OSCAR



Vol - ta la ter - re - a fron - te alle stel - le,
Her eyes sparkle when she turns her gaze to the stars.

Gustavus is in a capricious and playful mood. He is intrigued by what he has heard about the sorceress. Pleasure becomes the order of the day. Gustavus summons his court to visit Ulrica's den with him, but in disguise. He will be there disguised as a fisherman: they will investigate and determine if the Chief Justice's desire to banish Ulrica is based on fact or rumor.

"Ogni cura si doni al diletto"

Allegro brillante e presto

GUSTAVUS



O - gni cu - ra si do - ni al di - let - to, e s'ac - corra nel magi - co tet - to:
Let's forget our cares and enjoy ourselves in the witch's den:

Anckarström protests, cautioning Gustavus again that he is vulnerable and in jeopardy; his court swarms with traitors and conspirators prepared to assassinate him. Gustavus silences his zealous friend and secretary, again audaciously proclaiming that he is protected by the love of his subjects. Simultaneously, the conspirators express their joy, whispering to each other that the king's adventure might finally provides them with an opportunity to carry out their assassination plot.

Gustavus orders everyone to rendezvous at Ulrica's cave at three o'clock.

Act I – Scene 2: The fortune-teller Ulrica's cave.

A crowd fills Ulrica's cave, anticipating predictions for their future. Trancelike, Ulrica exults before a burning cauldron as she pronounces a sinister and mysterious invocation of the spirit of darkness, claiming that she envisions his powerful glow.

“Re dell’abisso affrettati”

Andante sostenuto

MME. ARVIDSON (ULRICA)



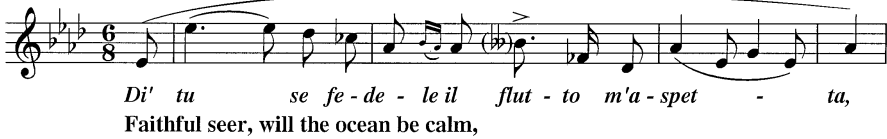
Christian, a sailor, emerges from the crowd and asks Ulrica to predict his future, complaining that for 12 years he has loyally served his country, but has not been rewarded with a promotion. Ulrica takes his hand, studies his palm, and then predicts that he will soon benefit from wealth and promotion. Gustavus, disguised as a fisherman, hides in the darkness of the cave; he stealthily approaches Christian and places a commission and gold into his pocket. When Christian reaches into his pocket for money to pay Ulrica for her favorable prediction, he finds the paper and reads it with excitement: the king has honored him and he has received a promotion; his second reward of gold duly thrills him. Overjoyed, Christian and the crowd praise Ulrica's powers of prophecy.

There is a knock on the door. Gustavus becomes curious and bewildered when he recognizes Amelia's manservant. Gustavus overhears the servant ask Ulrica for a private meeting about a matter of great concern for his mistress with the wise seer. Ulrica dismisses the crowd, telling them she will call them to return later for more predictions. However, Gustavus remains, hiding in the shadows of the cave.

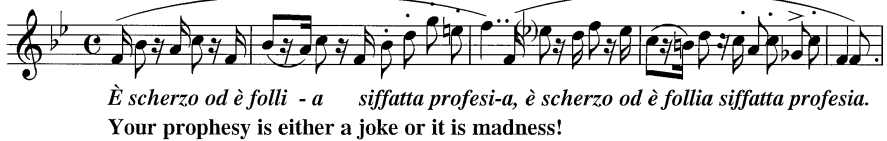
Amelia confronts Ulrica, tormented, agitated, and fearful; she reveals that she has come to seek Ulrica's assistance in order to conquer her illicit feelings of love for the king. She pours out her distress: "I am devoted to my husband and against my will, I love another." Gustavus, overhearing Amelia's revelation, erupts into joy.

The sorceress advises Amelia that there is but one antidote to cure her woes: she must go to the gallows at the execution fields near the city gates at midnight; there, she must pluck a magic herb whose juice will rid her of her infectious feelings of love. Ulrica's prescription directs Amelia to the last place a well-born lady would dare set foot: in effect, she has created a test of Amelia's will power. Gustavus watches Amelia as she shivers, trembles in fear, and prays for strength: he vows to rendezvous with her at her midnight mission and protect her.

Amelia leaves. Ulrica asks the crowd to return. Gustavus, still incognito, steps forward and announces that he is a humble fisherman seeking Ulrica's prediction of his future.

*“Di’ tu se fedele il flutto m’aspetta”***Allegro giusto****GUSTAVUS**

Ulrica addresses the fisherman, noting that he is seemingly carefree and oblivious to danger; she cautions him that sinister powers can quickly change laughter into tears. Solemnly, Ulrica examines the fisherman's palm, concluding that they are the hands of a leader, and of a man experienced in the dangers of warfare. Ulrica suddenly breaks away from the fisherman, seemingly struck by terror. She refuses to continue, but the crowd urges her on. Ulrica prophesies doom for the fisherman, predicting that he will soon die by the hand of a friend. The crowd reacts with shock at her fateful prediction, but Gustavus condemns it as ludicrous.

*“È scherzo od è follia siffatta profesia”***Andante mosso****quasi Allegretto****GUSTAVUS**

Gustavus challenges Ulrica to reveal the name of the man who would murder him: she predicts “that it will be the first man to shake his hand today!” Gustavus defiantly extends his hand to the bystanders, but no one dares touch it.

At that very moment, Anckarström, anxious about Gustavus's safety, enters the cave, immediately greeting Gustavus with a warm handshake. Gustavus ridicules Ulrica's prediction by telling her “you have lied, this man is my most cherished comrade.”

Gustavus reveals his identity to Ulrica, facetiously expressing his amazement that her friend, the Devil, did not recognize the king. Gustavus rewards Ulrica with a purse of money and urges her to flee before she is condemned to exile. She acknowledges his generosity, and warns him to be on guard, cautioning him that there are indeed traitors in his midst.

Christian leads the crowd in a hymn praising King Gustavus. The conspirators, Ribbing and Horn, express their frustration; their plan to assassinate the king has again been thwarted.

Act II: The executions field near Stockholm.

It is approaching midnight. Amelia has pursued her mission and has arrived at the execution field outside the city. She is terrified yet determined to secure the magic herb prescribed by Ulrica, the antidote that will rid her of her uncontrollable passion for Gustavus: through the power of the sorcerer's mighty cure, her salvation will arrive, and her anguish and anxiety will end at last.

“Ma dall’arido stelo divulsa”

Andante
AMELIA



Ma dall'a - ri - do stelo di-vul - sa come avrò di mia mano quell'erba.
I'll pick the magic herb with my own hands, then my anguish will disappear.

As the clock strikes midnight, Amelia trembles when she sees a stranger approaching: in fear and terror, she falls to her knees and prays for mercy. The stranger is Gustavus, fulfilling his vow to rendezvous with Amelia at the terrifying execution fields after he overheard her plans while hiding in Ulrica's cave.

Amelia and Gustavus struggle against their inner conflict: of passion versus reason. Amelia pleads with Gustavus to abandon his love for her: that he should consider her honor and the shame and disgrace that would overcome them if they were discovered; and that he must not betray her husband's devotion to him, the man who would sacrifice his life for his king. Gustavus, equally tormented by inner conflict, admits that he is guilty of compromising his scruples, yet he cannot control his profound yearning and desire for Amelia; similarly, Amelia prays for a miracle, divine guidance to rescue her from her weaknesses and faults.

“Non sai tu che se l'anima mia”

Allegro un poco sostenuto
GUSTAVUS



Non sai tu che se l'a - ni-ma mia il ri - morso di la -ce -ra erode,
Don't you know that I'm torn by guilt and remorse?

Amelia pleads with Gustavus: that they abandon their love for the sake of her husband's name and honor. But Gustavus is heedless to her pleas, his passions increasing and becoming reckless: Gustavus demands that Amelia admit that she loves him; Amelia surrenders to her heart and admits her love for Gustavus.

Gustavus becomes ecstatic, abandoning conscience, loyalty, and friendship: likewise, Amelia's resistance crumbles and she submits uneasily to Gustavus's seductive insistence; both are overcome by temptation and their uncontrolled, unrestrained passions; they eloquently and rapturously affirm their love for each other.

“O qual soave brivido”

Poco meno
GUSTAVUS and AMELIA



O qual so - a - ve bri - vi - do l'ac - ce - so pet - to ir - ro - ra!
What sweet perfume soothes my aching heart!

The sound of footsteps approaching interrupts the two lovers. Both become horrified when they recognize that it is Anckarström approaching; he has come to protect his king and warn him of imminent danger to his life. Anckarström describes that he had been cloaked in disguise and spied on the conspirators; he is now privy to their fatal plans to assassinate the king.

In the darkness, Anckarström does not recognize Amelia, now veiled. Anckarström persuades Gustavus to flee to safety; both exchange cloaks. Before departing, Gustavus makes Anckarström promise to escort the veiled lady back to the city and protect her anonymity; he must not raise her veil nor look at her face. Gustavus departs, leaving Anckarström alone with the veiled, unknown lady.

Ribbing, Horn, and the conspirators appear. They have zealously pursued their prey and are prepared to assault the man they believe to be King Gustavus; however, they become disappointed when they discover that it is Anckarström disguised in the king's cloak. They try to tear the veil from the trembling woman, but Anckarström draws his sword in defense. Amelia intervenes in order to avoid a fatal duel and bloodshed: her veil falls. The conspirators, and her husband, Anckarström, stand frozen, dumbfounded, and shocked.

The conspirators burst into mocking laughter, sarcastically ridiculing Anckarström for presumably having a moonlight tryst with his own wife. Nevertheless, Anckarström quickly realizes that he has been betrayed: his wife's secret lover is his best friend, the king. He has been humiliated and seethes with rage, jealousy, dishonor, and shame: vengeance stirs within his soul. With conviction, he invites the conspirators to call upon him the next day, and then proceeds to lead Amelia to the city.

Act III - Scene 1: A private study in Anckarström's home. In the background, there is a large portrait of King Gustavus.

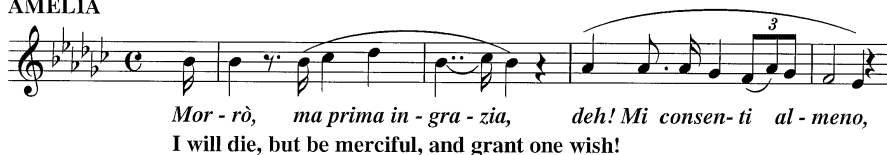
Anckarström's love for Amelia has quickly transformed into hate; he is outraged and humiliated, a man in shame and dishonor. His loathing is for both Amelia and King Gustavus. He vows neither pardon nor contrition; his shame and betrayal can only be vindicated by a murderous revenge: the spilling of blood.

Anckarström tells Amelia that her guilt must be punished by death. Amelia pleads for mercy, defending her innocence, and claiming that although she did indeed love Gustavus, she did nothing dishonorable. Amelia swears that she went to the execution fields for Anckarström's sake, seeking the antidote that would help her crush her uncontrollable passion for the king.

Anckarström bitterly castigates her, but mercifully accedes to her last wish: that she may see her son before she is to die; "embrace the child, and may his innocence remind you of your guilt."

"Morrò, ma prima ingazia"

Andante
AMELIA

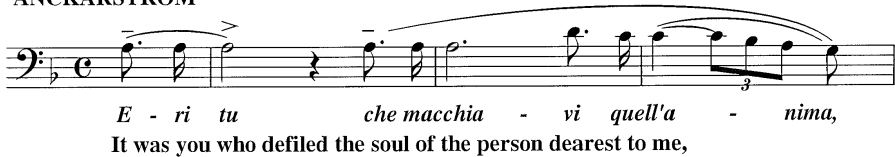


After Amelia departs, Anckarström vents his fury, realizing that he is mistaken to take vengeance on Amelia, but rather, it is his former friend Gustavus who bears the guilt; he must pay for his treachery, and it is his blood that will eradicate his shame and restore his honor.

Anckarström turns sorrowfully and with agitation to a portrait of Gustavus and condemns him: “My best friend, you have betrayed me. You have driven peace and love from my heart for evermore.” He grieves as he bids farewell to love: his love of Amelia, and his love of Gustavus, a noble friendship. Love has transformed into violent hatred.

“Eri tu”

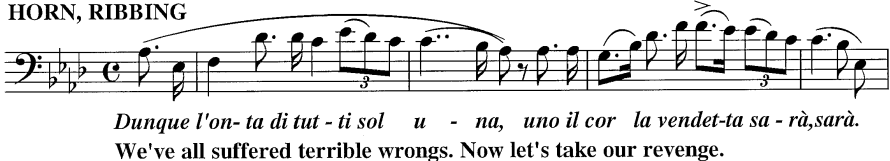
Andante sostenuto
ANCKARSTRÖM



The conspirators meet with Anckarström, who reveals to them that he has written proof of their conspiracy; however, he will not betray them. In fact, he himself will join them in their plot to assassinate the king, assuaging their doubts of his loyalty by offering his son's life in their trust. The three conspirators unite, vowing their intent and determination for vengeance.

“Dunque l'onta di tutti sol una”

Meno mosso
ANCKARSTRÖM,
HORN, RIBBING



Anckarström insists that he alone be chosen to carry out the deed: nevertheless, Ribbing claims the right because the king stole his father's castle; and Horn claims the right because the king killed his brother. The three conspirators decide that chance, the drawing of lots, will determine the assassin: they place their names on three 3 cards that are placed in an urn.

At that very moment, Amelia returns to advise her husband that Oscar has arrived with an invitation to the king's masked ball. Anckarström detains Amelia, forcing her to pick the assassin's name from the urn. Amelia trembles, sensing terror as she draws a paper from the urn: the paper bears Anckarström's name. Amelia panics, sensing their motives, and realizing that she has chosen her husband to be the king's assassin.

Oscar has arrived with invitations to the masked ball. The conspirators rejoice because the ball will provide a perfect opportunity for them to assassinate Gustavus. The conspirators will recognize each other by their disguise: blue and red domino costume; and their password will be “morte” (“death.”)

Amelia remains in despair, pondering what she can do to thwart their assassination attempt and save the king. She decides to write a letter to the king — unsigned — and warn him not to attend the masked ball; Oscar is given the letter to deliver to the king.

Act III - Scene 2: Gustavus's study.

Gustavus has fallen prey to his conscience and has decided to become the master over his emotions: reluctantly, he will resist further temptation and abandon his obsession for Amelia; duty and sacred honor inevitably must keep them divided. He will name Anckarström envoy to Finland: Amelia will join him; their love will perish, as well as shame, adultery, and infidelity. Gustavus is hesitant, doubtful, and reluctant, nevertheless, he signs the order and places it inside his coat, lamenting that fate has meddled with his heart.

“Ma se m'è forza perverti”

Andante
GUSTAVUS



Dance music is heard from the ball. Oscar delivers an anonymous letter to Gustavus: it is Amelia's letter warning him that his life is in mortal danger, and that he should not attend the masked ball. Gustavus renounces the advice, fearing that if he does not attend the ball, he will be looked upon as a coward. More importantly, his emotions are again overpowered by reason: he will attend the ball, satisfying his yearning to see Amelia one last time.

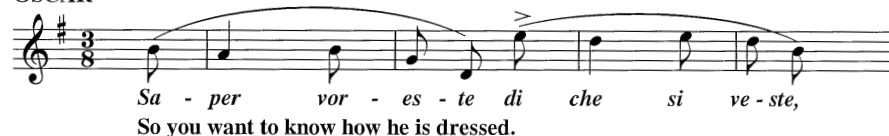
Act III - Scene 3: The Masked Ball.

In a sumptuous ballroom, the masked guests dance and express joy and merriment. Anckarström, Ribbing, Horn, and other conspirators, wear blue robes with red scarves. Anckarström has difficulty locating the king among the disguised guests, and worries that the king may have become aware of their plot and decided not to attend the ball.

Oscar appears before Anckarström, jokingly telling him that his disguise does not fool him, and that he easily recognizes him. Oscar reveals that the king is indeed at the ball, but he refuses to betray his disguise to Anckarström.

“Saper voreste”

Allegretto
OSCAR



Anckarström convinces Oscar that he must talk to the king because he bears important and urgent information for him: Oscar must point out the king, because if something fatal would happen, Oscar would bear the responsibility. Oscar is persuaded and unwittingly reveals to Anckarström that the king will be wearing a black cloak with a scarlet ribbon on his chest.

Gustavus enters the ball. He is absorbed in deep thought. Amelia recognizes him and follows him, warning him of the imminent danger to his life. Gustavus recognizes her voice but is heedless to her pleas; he erupts into passionate vows of his love for her. Then he sobs bitterly, and bids her farewell, advising her that he has ordered Anckarström to Finland.

Anckarström recognizes Gustavus and steps between them, raises his dagger, and stabs Gustavus. Oscar immediately unmasks Anckarström, the assembled guests exploding into outrage, and demanding vengeance and Anckarström's death.

Gustavus, breathless and despairing, intercedes, ordering that Anckarström's life be spared. The crime was his own fault, he precipitated it, and it is he who is guilty. Gustavus admits that he indeed loved Amelia, but she was innocent of any wrongdoing; he swears to Anckarström that she did not betray her husband and her honor remains chaste.

“Io che amai”

Andante
GUSTAVUS



Io che a - mai la tua con - sor-te ri - spet-ta - to ho il suo candor.
I loved your wife yet I respected her honor.

Gustavus gives Anckarström the royal decree ordering them both to Finland: “go in peace – you shall not be punished.” In his final farewell to his countrymen, the king pardons Anckarström and all the conspirators.

Anckarström grieves over his tragic error, his obsession for blood and vengeance that overpowered his reason: the conspirators, Ribbing and Horn, finally realize their misdeed.

The king dies, his grieving subjects praising his benevolence and generosity.

Libretto

A Masked Ball

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Act I

It is morning in a reception room in the Royal Palace, near King Gustavus's apartments. An entourage of Gustavus's subjects await his arrival: army officers, noblemen, delegates of the people, as well as the conspirators, Counts Horn, Ribbing, and their followers.

Ufficiali e Gentiluomini:

Posa in pace, a' bei sogni ristora,
o Gustavo il tuo nobile cor.
A te scudo su questa dimora
sta d'un vergine mondo l'amor.

Horn, Ribbing, e Cospiratori:

(E sta l'odio che prepara il fio,
ripensando ai caduti per te.
Come speri, disceso l'oblio
sulle tombe infelici non è.)

Officers and Gentlemen:

Rest peacefully, King Gustavus,
and be refreshed by pleasant dreams.
Your people rally around you
and protect you with their love.

Horn, Ribbing, and Conspirators:

(Your foes prepare for vengeance,
avenging those who died because of you.
The fate of our unfortunate friends is not
forgotten; precluding any hopes for peace.)

The page Oscar alerts the assemblage that King Gustavus is arriving.

Oscar:

S'avanza il Re.

Oscar:

The King is coming.

Gustavo:

Amici miei, soldati, e voi del par diletta
me!

Gustavus: (saluting his subjects)

My friends, soldiers, and all those who I love
so dearly!

The King is given petitions.

Porgete: a me s'aspetta.
Io deggio su' miei fidi vegliar,
perchè sia pago ogni voto, se giusto.
Bello il poter non è, che de' soggetti
le lacrime non terge, e ad incorrotta
gloria non mira.

Give me your petitions:
it is my duty to grant whatever my faithful
subjects deserve:
power is glorious when it brings happiness to
others, but it is abused when glory becomes
its only goal.

Oscar:

Leggere vi piaccia delle danze l'invito.

Oscar: (handing the King a document)

Read the list of people invited to the ball.

Gustavo:

Avresti qualche beltà dimenticato?

Gustavus:

Did you leave out any of beautiful ladies?

Oscar:

Eccovi i nomi.

Oscar:

Here are the names.

Gustavo:

Amelia. Ah, dessa ancor! L'anima mia
in lei rapita ogni grandezza oblia!

Gustavus: (to himself)

Ah, Amelia, there's her name again! She
makes me forget important affairs of state!

Poco meno mosso

GUSTAVUS



(La rivedrà nell'estasi
raggiante di pallore
e qui suonar d'amore
la sua parola udrà.
O dolce notte, scendere
tu puoi gemmata a festa:
ah la mia stella è questa
che il ciel non ha!)

(I'll be in ecstasy
when I see her radiance again.
When she speaks,
I hear music of love.
Oh sweet night, descend
with your glowing jewels:
but my shining star
is not in the heavens!

Oscar, Ufficiali e Gentiluomini:

Con generoso affetto
entro se stesso assorto,
il nostro bene oggetto
de' suoi pensier farà.

Oscar, Officials and Gentlemen:

He is consumed
by his generosity and affection,
always concerned
with his people's welfare.

Horn, Ribbing, e Cospiratori:

(L'ora non è, che tutto
qui d'operar ne toglie:
dalle nemiche soglie
meglio l'uscir sarà.)

Horn, Ribbing, and Conspirators:

(This is not the opportune time to carry out our plan: we should avoid suspicion and leave here at once.)

Gustavo:

Il cenno mio di là con essi attendi.

Gustavus: *(to Oscar)*

Have everyone wait outside until I call them.

All depart. As Oscar departs, Anckarström enters.

Oscar:

Libero è il varco a voi.

Oscar: *(to Anckarström)*

The King is free to see you now.

Anckarström:

(Deh come triste appar!)

Ankarström: *(commenting about Gustavus)*

(He seems to be sad!)

Gustavo:

(Amelia!)

Gustavus: *(to himself)*

(Amelia!)

Anckarström:

Sire!

Ankarström: (*bowing*)

Your Majesty!

Gustavo:

O ciel, lo sposo suo!

Gustavus:

Oh heavens, her husband!

Anckarström:

Turbato il mio Signor, mentre dovunque il
nome suo inclito suona?

Gustavo:

Per la gloria è molto, nulla per cor.
Secreta, acerba cura m'opprime.

Anckarström:

E d'onde?

Gustavo:

Ah no, non più!

Anckarström:

Dirolla io la cagion.

Gustavo:

(Gran Dio!)

Anckarström:

So tutto.

Gustavo:

E che?

Anckarström:

So tutto!
Già questa soglia stessa non t'è sicuro
asilo.

Gustavo:

Prosegui.

Anckarström:

Un reo disegno nell'ombre si matura,
i giorni tuoi minaccia.

Gustavo:

Ah, gli è di ciò che parli?
Altro non sai?

Anckarström:

Se udir t'è grato i nomi...

Gustavo:

Che importa? Io li disprezzo.

Anckarström: (*approaching the King*)

Why are you so disturbed, my Lord? All over,
the people hail your glory and praise you.

Gustavus:

Glory pleases my pride, but not my heart.
A private matter depresses me.

Anckarström:

Can you tell me?

Gustavus:

No, no more!

Anckarström:

I know the cause of it.

Gustavus: (*to himself*)

(Great God!)

Anckarström:

I know everything.

Gustavus:

And what is that?

Anckarström:

I know everything!
You're not safe, even in this room of the
royal palace.

Gustavus:

Continue.

Anckarström:

Traitors are launching a secret plot against
your life.

Gustavus: (*joyfully*)

So that's what you meant?
There's nothing more?

Anckarström:

I'll reveal their names...

Gustavus:

It's unimportant? I despise them.

Anckarström:

Svelarli è mio dover.

Gustavo:

Taci: nel sangue contaminarmi allor dovrei.
Non fia, nol vo'.
Del popolo mio l'amor guardi, e mi
protegga Iddio.

Anckarström:

It is my duty to tell you.

Gustavus:

Quiet! Don't force me to shed their blood
It shall not be. I don't wish it.
My people's love guards me,
and God protects me.

Andante

ANCKARSTRÖM**Anckarström:**

Alla vita che t'arride
di speranze e gaudio piena,
d'altre mille e mille vite
il destino s'incatena!

Te perduto, ov'è la patria,
col suo splendido avvenir?

E sarà dovunque sempre
chiuso il varco alle ferite,
perchè scudo del tuo petto
è del popolo l'affetto?

Dell'amor più desto è l'odio
le sue vittime a colpir!

Anckarström:

Your life is promising,
full of joy and hope.
and the destiny of thousands upon thousands
of your subjects is tied to you!

If you are lost, what will become of our
country and its brilliant future?

You believe that no harm will come to you.
You believe that the love
of your citizens
will protect you?

But hatred is quicker to strike its victims
than love!

Oscar announces the arrival of the Chief Justice.

Oscar:

Il primo Giudice.

Gustavo:

S'avanzi.

Il Giudice:

Sire!

Gustavo:

Che leggo! Il bando ad una donna:
or d'onde?
Qual è il suo nome? Di che rea?

Oscar:

The Chief Justice.

Gustavus:

Admit him.

The Justice: *(handing documents to the King)*

Your Majesty!

Gustavus:

What do I read! A woman to be banished?
Who is she?
What's her name? What is her guilt?

Il Giudice:

S'appella Ulrica, del futuro divinatrice.

Oscar:

Intorno a cui s'affollano tutte le stirpi.
Del futuro l'alta divinatrice.

Il Giudice:

Che nell'antro abietto chiama i peggiori,
d'ogni reo consiglio sospetta è già.
Dovuta è a lei l'esilio:
nè muta il voto mio.

Gustavo:

Che ne di' tu?

Oscar:

Difenderla vogl'io.

The Justice:

Her name is Ulrica, and she is guilty of witchcraft.

Oscar:

People of all classes flock to her. She is an amazing fortune teller.

The Justice:

She lures wretched beggars and criminals to
her den,
Nothing will change my decision:
she must be banished.

Gustavus: *(to Oscar)*

What do you think about it?

Oscar:

I want to defend her.

Allegro
OSCAR



Volta la terrea
fronte alle stelle
come sfavilla
la sua pupilla,
quando alle belle
il fin predice
mesto o felice
dei loro amor!
È con Lucifero d'accordo ognor! Sì, sì.....

Her eyes sparkle
when she
turns her gaze
to the stars.
And she can predict
whether love
will bring
happiness or sadness!
She's in league with Lucifer! Yes, yes....

Gustavo:

Che vaga coppia, che protettor!

Gustavus:

A devil and witch, all in one!

Oscar:

Chi la profetica
sua gonna afferra,
o passi'l mare,
voli alla guerra,
le sue vicende soavi,
amare da questa
apprende nel dubbio cor!

Oscar:

If you want to know the future,
go see her.
If you're crossing the sea,
or going to war,
she'll tell you if your future
will be bitter or sweet.
And her words will ease your heart!

Il Giudice:

Sia condannata!

Oscar:

Assolverla degnate!

Gustavo:

Ebben, tutti chiamate:
or v'apro un mio pensier.

The Judge:

She must be punished!

Oscar: (to the King)

Pardon her!

Gustavus:

All right, call everyone back:
I want them to hear my plan.

Anckarström and Oscar invite the others to return.

Signori: oggi Ulrica alla magion v'invito,
ma sotto altro vestito;
io là sarò.

Anckarström:

Davver?

Gustavo:

Sì, vo' gustar la scena.

Anckarström:

L'idea non è prudente.

Oscar:

La trovo anzi eccellente, feconda di piacer.

Anckarström:

Te ravvisar taluno ivi potria.

Gustavo:

Qual tema!

Horn e Ribbing:

(Ve', ve', di tutto trema codesto consiglier.)

Gustavo:

E tu m'appronta un abito da pescator.

Horn, Ribbing, e Cospirati:

(Chi sa che alla vendetta l'adito non s'apra
alfin colà?)

Gentlemen: today, I invite you to visit the
sorceress Ulrica, but be in disguise;
I'll be there too.

Anckarström:

Really?

Gustavus:

Yes, I want to see her at her work.

Anckarström:

It's too dangerous.

Oscar:

It's a wonderful idea.

Anckarström:

Someone might recognize you there.

Gustavus:

You're just scared!

Horn and Ribbing: (chuckling)

(See, his advisor is scared.)

Gustavus: (to Oscar)

Find me fisherman's clothes.

Horn, Ribbing, and Conspirators:

(Perhaps this is our chance to carry out our
plan for revenge?)

Allegro brillante e presto

GUSTAVUS



O - gni cu - ra si do - ni al di - let - to, e s' acc - orra nel magi - co tet - to:

Gustavo:

Ogni cura si doni al diletto,
e s'accorra nel magico tetto:
tra la folla de' creduli ognuno
s'abbandoni e folleggi con me.

Gustavus:

Let's forget our cares and enjoy ourselves in
the witch's den:
we'll mingle with her devotees,
and abandon ourselves to laughter.

Anckarström:

E s'accorra ma vegli il sospetto
sui perigli che fremono intorno,
ma protegga il magnanimo petto
a chi nulla paventa per se.

Anckarström:

Let's be watchful and suspicious:
it may be dangerous!
But may we protect the magnanimous heart
of one who fears nothing for himself.

Oscar:

L'indovina ne dice di belle,
e sta ben che l'interroghi anch'io;
sentirò se m'arridon le stelle,
di che sorti benefica m'è.

Oscar:

The fortune teller makes wondrous prophecies,
and it's well that I also question her;
I shall hear if the stars smile on me,
and if fate will be good to me.

Horn, Ribbing, e Cospiratori:

Senza posa vegliamo all'intento,
nè si perda ove scocchi il momento;
forse l'astro che regge il suo fato
nell'abisso là spegnersi de'.

Horn, Ribbing, and Conspirators:

We'll be there without calling attention
to our grim objectives;
perhaps the God who protects him
will abandon him that day.

Tutti:

Teco sarei di subito,
incogniti alle tre
nell'antro dell'oracolo,
della gran maga al piè.

Tutti:

I'll be expecting you there in disguise,
at three o'clock.
In the den of the great sorceress,
where we'll kneel at her feet.

End of Act I - Scene 1

Act I - Scene 2

The den of the fortune teller Ulrica (Mme. Arvidson). She invokes the Devil.

Popolani:

Zitti, l'incanto non dessi turbare,
il demonio tra breve halle a parlare!

People:

Hush, the spell must not be broken;
the Devil himself is about to speak to her!

Andante sostenuto

MME. ARVIDSON (ULRICA)

**Mlle. Arvidson:**

Re dell'abisso affrettati,
precipita per l'etra,
senza libar la folgore
il tetto mio penetra.

Mlle. Arvidson: *(as if inspired)*

King of the Abyss, hasten to me,
plunge through the air,
and enter my dwelling
without your burning thunderbolts.

Omai tre volte l'upupa
dall'alto sospirò;
la salamandra ignivora
tre volte sibilò
e delle tombe il gemito
tre volte a me parlò!

From on high, the owl
screached three times.
The fire-eating salamander
hissed three times.
And three times,
I heard a moan from the graveyard!

Gustavus enters, disguised as a fisherman.

He advances among the crowd, unable to find any of his followers.

Gustavo:

(Arrivo il primo!)

Gustavus:

(I'm the first to arrive!)

Popolani:

Villano, dà indietro!
Oh come tutto riluce di tetro!

People: *(Pushing him back)*

Rascal, go back!
And wait your turn!

Mlle. Arvidson:

È lui! Ne' palpiti
come risento adesso
la voluttà riardere
del suo tremendo amplesso!
La face del futuro
nella sinistra egli ha.

Mlle. Arvidson: *(with exaltation)*

The Devil is here!
I feel his presence.
I'm trembling
in his dreadful embrace!
He holds the torch of fate
in his left hand.

M'arrise al mio scongiuro,
rifolgorar la fa.
Nulla, più nulla ascondersi
al guardo mio potrà!

Tutti:

Evviva la maga!

Mlle. Arvidson:

Silenzio, silenzio!

He has answered my call.
I can see the future.
Now, nothing can be hidden
from my gaze!

All:

Long live the sorceress!

Mlle. Arvidson:

Silence!

Christian, a sailor, breaks through the crowd.

Christian:

Su, fatemi largo, saper vo' il mio fato.
Son servo del Re: son suo marinaio:
la morte per esso più volte ho sfidato;
tre lustri son corsi del vivere amaro,
tre lustri che nulla s'è fatto per me.

Mlle. Arvidson:

E chiedi?

Christian:

Qual sorte pel sangue versato m'attende?

Gustavo:

(Favella da franco soldato.)

Mlle. Arvidson:

La mano.

Christian:

Prendete.

Mlle. Arvidson:

Rallegrati omai: in breve dell'oro e un
grado t'avrai.

Christian:

Scherzate?

Mlle. Arvidson:

Va pago.

Christian:

Let me by. Tell my fortune. I am Christian,
one of the King's sailors.
I have risked my life for him many times.
I've served him for 15 hard years,
with nothing in return.

Mlle. Arvidson:

What are you asking for?

Christian:

What will I get for the blood I have shed?

Gustavus: (aside)

(He sounds like a good soldier.)

Mlle. Arvidson: (to Christian)

Give me your hand.

Christian:

Take it.

Mlle. Arvidson: (studying his hand)

Cheer up: soon you'll have some gold and a
commission.

Christian:

Are you joking?

Mlle. Arvidson:

Go content.

Christian is unaware that Gustavus has placed a scroll in his pocket.

Gustavo:

(Mentire non de'.)

Gustavus:

(I'll make that prophecy come true.)

Christian:

A fausto presagio ben vuolsi mercè!

Christian gropes in his pocket, finds the scroll, and reads it excitedly.

“Gustavo, al suo caro Christian ufficiale.”

Per bacco! Non sogno! Dell’oro ed un grado! Evviva!

Coro:

Evviva la nostra Sibilla immortale,
che spande su tutti ricchezze e piacer!

Christian:

I’ll pay you well for such a prophecy!

“From Gustavus to his dear friend,

Lieutenant Christian.” I’m not dreaming!
Gold and an officer’s commission! Hurrah!

Chorus:

Long live our immortal prophetess, who
showers riches and pleasures on all!

A knock is heard on the door. Ulrica opens the door for a servant.

Tutti:

Si batte!

All:

Someone’s knocking!

Gustavo:

(Che veggio! Sull’uscio segreto,
un servo d’Amelia!)

Gustavus: (to himself)

(What do I see! Amelia’s servant at the secret door!)

Servo:

Sentite: la mia signora, che aspetta là fuori,
vorriaregarvi in segreto d’arcano parer.

Servant: (to Ulrica, but heard by Gustavus)

Listen: my mistress waits outside, and she
would like to ask you privately for some advice.

Gustavo:

(Amelia!)

Gustavus: (aside)

(Amelia!)

Mlle. Arvidson:

S’innoltri, che tutti allontanano.

Mlle. Arvidson: (to the servant)

Let her come in. I’ll send everyone away.

Gustavo:

(Non me!)

Gustavus: (hiding in a recess)

(Except me!)

Mlle. Arvidson:

Perchè possa rispondere a voi è d’uopo che
innanzi m’abbocchi a Satana.
Uscite: lasciate che io scruti nel ver.

Mlle. Arvidson:

In order for me to answer you, I must first
confer with Satan in private.
Get outside, while I seek the truth.

Tutti:

Usciamo: si lasci che scruti nel ver.

Tutti:

Let’s go: leave her to search for the truth.

Mlle. Arvidson:

Uscite.

Mlle. Arvidson:

Leave.

Tutti:

Usciam.

All:

Let’s leave.

Gustavus hides while Amelia enters.

Mlle. Arvidson:

Che v'agita così?

Mlle. Arvidson:

What troubles you?

Amelia:

Segreto, acerba cura che amor destò.

Amelia:

I'm tormented by a subconscious passion.

Gustavo:

(Che ascolto!)

Gustavus: (aside)

(What do I hear!)

Mlle. Arvidson:

E voi cercate?

Mlle. Arvidson:

What are you seeking?

Amelia:

Pace, sveltermi dal petto chi sì fatale e
desiato impera!

Lui che su tutti il ciel arbitro pose.

Amelia:

I want peace. Tear that guilty desire for that
man from my heart: a man who heaven sent
to govern.

Gustavo:

(Che ascolto! Anima mia!)

Gustavus: (expressing joy)

(What do I hear! My darling Amelia!)

Mlle. Arvidson:

L'oblio v'è dato. Arcane stille conosco
d'una magica erba, che rinovella il cor.
Ma chi n'ha d'uopo spiccarla debbe di sua
mano nel fitto delle notti.
Funereo è il loco.

Mlle. Arvidson:

There's a way to forget him. There's a magic
herb that can heal the heart.
But you must pick it with your own hands
in the dead of night!
It is In a terrifying place!

Amelia:

Ov'è?

Amelia:

Where is it?

Mlle. Arvidson:

L'osate voi?

Mlle. Arvidson:

Do you dare?

Amelia:

Sì, qual esso sia.

Amelia: (resolved and determined)

Yes, I'll do anything.

Mlle. Arvidson:

Dunque ascoltate.
Della città all'ocaso,
là dove al tetro lato batte la luna pallida
sul campo abominato.
Abbarbica gli stami a quelle pietre infami,
ove la colpa scontasi coll'ultimo sospir!

Mlle. Arvidson:

Then listen.
Leave the city, and walk toward the west.
The moon will be shining on an
executioner's site.
There, where the guilty pay for their crimes,
you'll find the herb!

Amelia:

Mio Dio! Qual loco!

Amelia:

My God! What a place!

Mlle. Arvidson:

Attonita e già tremante siete?

Gustavo:

(Povero cor!)

Mlle. Arvidson:

V'esanima?

Amelia:

Agghiaccio!

Mlle. Arvidson:

E l'oserete?

Amelia:

Se tale è il dover mio troverò possa anch'io.

Mlle. Arvidson:

Stanotte?

Amelia:

Sì.

Gustavo:

(Non sola: che te degg'io seguir.)

Amelia:Consentimi, o Signore
virtù ch'io lavi il core
e l'inflammato palpito
nel petto mio sopir!**Mlle. Arvidson:**Va, non tremar, l'incanto
inaridisce il pianto.
Osa e berrai nel farmaco
l'oblio de' tuoi martir.**Gustavo:**(Ardo, e seguirti ho fisso se fosse
nell'abisso, Amelia, pur ch'io respiri,
l'aura de' tuoi sospir.)**Voci:**Figlia d'averno, schiudi la chiostra,
e tarda meno a noi ti mostra.**Mlle. Arvidson:**

Are you pale and trembling?

Gustavus: (aside)

(Poor soul!)

Mlle. Arvidson:

Are you discouraged?

Amelia:

I am freezing!

Mlle. Arvidson:

And will you dare it?

Amelia:

Since it's my duty, I'll find the courage.

Mlle. Arvidson:

Tonight?

Amelia:

Yes.

Gustavus:

(You won't be alone. I'll follow you there.)

Amelia:Lord, restor virtue
to my guilty heart.
Quench this burning passion
that throbs within me!**Mlle. Arvidson:**Go, don't tremble,
the spell dries the tears.
If you dare to drink the drug,
you will forget your suffering.**Gustavus:**(Amelia, I burn, and I'll follow you as long
as I'm alive, as long as I can feel the breath
of your sighs.)**Voices: (in the background)**Daughter of hell, open the gate, and don't
keep us waiting!

Mlle. Arvidson:

Presto, partite.

Mlle. Arvidson: *(to Amelia)*

Quickly, leave.

Amelia:

Stanotte, addio.

Amelia:

Tonight, farewell.

Mlle. Arvidson:

Addio.

Mlle. Arvidson:

Farewell.

Gustavo:

(Non sola: che te degg'io seguir!)

Gustavus:

(Don't fear! I'll be with you!)

After Amelia disappears through the secret door, followed by Gustavus, Mme. Arvidson admits the others: Horn, Ribbing and their followers, Oscar, noblemen, and officers; all are in bizarre disguises, and Gustavus is among them.

Tutti:

Su, profetessa, monta il treppiè;
canta il futuro, monta il treppiè.

All:

Come, prophetess, stand before us!
Mount your cauldron and tell us our future.

Oscar:

Ma il Re ov'è?

Oscar:

But where is the King?

Gustavo:

(Taci, nascondile che qui son io.)

Gustavus: *(approaching Oscar)*

(Quiet, don't let her know who I am.)

(turning to Ulrica)

Or tu, Sibilla, che tutto sai,
della mia stella mi parlerai.

Now sorceress, since you know everything,
tell me what's in my stars.

Horn e Ribbing:

Canta il futuro.

Horn and Ribbing:

Predict the future.

Allegro giusto
GUSTAVUS



Di' tu se fedele
il flutto m'aspetta,
se molle di pianto
la donna diletta
dicendomi addio tradi l'amor mio.
Con lacere vele
e l'alma in tempesta i solchi so franger
dell'onda funesta,
l'averno ed il cielo irati sfidar.

Faithful seer,
will the ocean be faithful and calm,
while my beloved
bids me farewell,
betraying my love.
I sail my ship
through the terrible storm
with a troubled heart.
I brave the furies of heaven and hell.

Sollecita esplora, divina gli eventi, non
possono i fulmin, la rabbia de' venti la
morte, l'amore sviarmi dal mar. No.

Sull'agile prora che m'agita in grembo se
scosso mi sveglio ai fischi del nembo,
ripeto fra tuoni le dolci canzoni del tetto
natio, che i baci ricordan dell'ultimo addio,
e tutte raccendon le forze del cor.

Su dunque, risuoni la tua profezia di ciò che
può sorgere dal fato qual sia; nell'anime
nostre non entra terror.

Mlle. Arvidson:

Chi voi siate, l'audace parola può nel pianto
prorompere un giorno, se chi sforza
l'arcano soggiorno va la colpa nel duolo a
lavar.

Se chi sfida il suo fato insolente deve l'onta
nel fato scontar.

Gustavo:

Orsù, amici!

Horn:

Ma il primo chi fia?

Oscar:

Io!

Gustavo:

L'onore a me cedi.

Oscar:

E lo sia!

Mlle. Arvidson:

È la destra d'un grande, vissuto
sotto gli astri di Marte.

Oscar:

(Nel vero ella colse.)

Gustavo:

Tacete.

But hurry, tell me what future awaits me.
Neither lightning, winds, love, or death
can keep me from the sea!

I rock to sleep in the prow of my boat. A
raging storm awakens me, and then I sing
lovely songs from my native land.
And I remember those last, tender, farewell
kisses, that renew my strength.

Now hurry, tell us our future.
Let your prophecy resound.
Whatever it is, we're not afraid.

Mlle. Arvidson:

Whoever you might be, you speak rashly.
Your brash words may soon cause you tears,
and one who demands to know hidden
secrets could be drowned in sorrow.

If you dare to defy destiny, then destiny will
condemn you.

Gustavus:

Come, friends!

Horn:

Who will be first?

Oscar:

I!

Gustavus: (*offering his palm to Arvidson*)

Give me that honor.

Oscar:

Let it be!

Mlle. Arvidson: (*studying Gustavus's palm*)

This is the hand of a nobleman,
and a ruler.

Oscar:

(She hit upon the truth.)

Gustavus:

Keep quiet.

Mlle. Arvidson:

Infelice, va, mi lascia, non chieder di più!

Mlle. Arvidson: *(breaking away from him)*

Bad luck! Go, leave, and ask nothing more!

Gustavo:

Su, prosegui.

Gustavus:

Come on, continue.

Mlle. Arvidson:

No, lasciami.

Mlle. Arvidson:

No, leave me.

Gustavo:

Parla.

Gustavus:

Speak.

Mlle. Arvidson:

Te ne prego.

Mlle. Arvidson:

I beg you.

Otre:

Eh, finiscila omai!

Others:

Hey, why don't you finish it now!

Gustavo:

Te lo impongo!

Gustavus:

I demand your prophecy!

Mlle. Arvidson:

Ebben, presto morrai.

Mlle. Arvidson:

All right! Soon, you will die.

Gustavo:

Se sul campo d'onor, ti so grado.

Gustavus:

If it is on the field of battle, I am honored.

Mlle. Arvidson:

No, per man d'un amico!

Mlle. Arvidson: *(with vehemence)*

No! You'll die by the hand of a friend.

Oscar:

Gran Dio! Quale orror!

Oscar:

Great God! How horrible!

Otre:

Quale orror!

Others:

How horrible!

Mlle. Arvidson:

Così scritto è lassù!

Mlle. Arvidson:

Thus it is written above!

Andante mosso
quasi Allegretto
GUSTAVUS



È scherzo od è folli - a siffatta profesia, è scherzo od è follia siffatta profesia.

Gustavo:

È scherzo od è follia
siffata profezia,
ma come fa da ridere
la lor credulità!

Mlle. Arvidson:

Ah voi signori, a queste
paròle mie funeste,
voi non osate ridere:
Che dunque in cor vi sta?

Horn e Ribbing:

(La sua parola è dardo,
è fulmine lo sguardo,
dal confidente demone
tutto costei risa.)

Oscar:

Ah! E tal fia dunque il fato?
Ch'ei cada assassinato?
Al sol pensarci l'anima abbrividendo va.

Gustavo:

Finisici il vaticinio.
Di' chi fia dunque l'uccisor?

Mlle. Arvidson:

Chi primo tua man quest'oggi stringerà.

Gustavo:

Bennissimo!

Gustavus: (looking around)

Your prophecy is either a joke or it is
madness!
It makes my laugh to see gullible they are in
believing it!

Mlle. Arvidson: (in front of Horn and Ribbing)

Ah, you gentlemen
aren't laughing
at my frightful words:
What then is in your hearts?

Horn and Ribbing:

(She sees right through us!
Her word is like an arrow,
her gaze like a thunderbolt.
She knows our plan!)

Oscar:

Ah! Must this be his cruel fate:
that he will be murdered?
My soul begins to shudder at the very thought.

Gustavus:

Finish your prophecy.
Who will my murderer be?

Mlle. Arvidson:

The next man who shakes your hand.

Gustavus:

Very well!

Gustavus offers his hand to bystanders, but no one dares touch it.

Qual è di voi che provi l'oracolo bugiardo?
Nessuno!

Who among you will prove that her
prediction is a lie? No one!

Anckarström enters. He recognizes Gustavus, rushes toward him, and clasps his hand.

Eccolo.

Here he is.

Tutti

È desso!

All:

It is he!

Horn, Ribbing:

(Respiro, il caso ne salvò.)

Horn, Ribbing: (to the conspirators)

(Fortunately, we haven't been discovered!)

Oscar e Coro:

L'oracolo mentiva.

Gustavo:

Sì, perchè la man che stringo è del più fido amico mio.

Anckarström:

Gustavo!

Mlle. Arvidson:

Il Re!

Gustavo:

Nè chi fossi il genio tuo ti rivelò,
nè che voleano al bando oggi dannarti.

Mlle. Arvidson:

Me?

Gustavo:

T'acqueta e prendi.

Mlle. Arvidson:

Magnanimo tu se, ma v'ha fra loro
un traditor: più d'uno forse.

Horn e Ribbing:

(Gran Dio!)

Gustavo:

Non più.

Coro:

Viva Gustavo!

Otre:

Quai voci?

Christian:

È lui, ratti movete:
il vostro amico e padre.
Tutti con me chinate al suo piede,
amor di questa terra.

Tutti:

O figlio de la Svèzia,
amor di questa terra:
Reggi felice, arridano gloria e salute a te.

Oscar and Chorus:

The prediction is false.

Gustavus:

Yes, because the man who shakes my hand
is my most faithful friend.

Anckarström:

Gustavus!

Mlle. Arvidson: (*recognizing the King*)

The King!

Gustavus: (*to Mme. Arvidson*)

Your witchcraft didn't tell you who I was, or
that you were to be banished.

Mlle. Arvidson:

Me?

Gustavus: (*throwing her a purse*)

Calm yourself and take this money.

Mlle. Arvidson:

You are a generous man, but there is a traitor
among your men, perhaps more than one.

Horn and Ribbing:

(Great God!)

Gustavus:

No more.

Chorus:

Long live Gustavus!

Others:

Those voices!

Christian:

It is the King!
Let us praise our friend and protector.
All join me and kneel before him, and show
him that we love and honor him!

All:

Oh son of Sweden,
beloved of this country:
Reign happily, in glory and good health.

Oscar:

Il più superbo alloro
che vince ogni tesoro,
alla tua chioma s' intrecciano
riconoscenza e fè.

Gustavo:

E posso alcun sospetto
alimentar nel petto,
se mille cuori battono
per immolarsi a me.

Anckarström:

Ma la sventura è cosa
pur ne trionfi ascosa,
là dove il fato ipocrita
veli una rea mercè.

Mlle. Arvidson:

Non crede al proprio fato,
ma pur morrà piagato.
Sorrise al mio presagio
ma nella fossa ha il piè.

Horn, Ribbing, e Cospiratori:

(Chiude al ferir la via
questa servil genia,
che sta lambendo l' idolo
e che non sa il perchè.)

Oscar:

May the proudest laurel,
transcending every treasure,
adorn your crown,
demonstrating our gratitude and devotion.

Gustavus:

In my heart, I find no reason to be
fearful or suspicious,
because a thousand beating hearts
are prepared to sacrifice their lives for me.

Anckarström:

But sometimes misfortune
hides behind triumphs,
because fate is a hypocrite capable
of dealing cruel rewards.

Mlle. Arvidson:

He doesn't believe my prophecy,
but soon he will die wounded.
He laughed at my prediction,
but he has one foot in the grave.

Horn, Ribbing, and Conspirators:

(This subservient rabble
panders to their idol,
ignorant of the truth,
and blocking our path to killing him.)

End of Act I

Act II

It is approaching midnight at the execution field at the outskirts of Stockholm. Amelia appears, seeking Ulrica's antidote to extinguish her uncontrollable passions for Gustavus.

Amelia:

Ecco l'orrido campo ove s'accoppia
al delitto la morte!

Ecco là le colonne, la pianta è là,
verdeggia al piè.

S'inoltri. Ah! Mi si agghela il core!
Sino il rumor de' passi miei qui tutto
m'empie di raccapriccio e di terrore!

E se perir dovessi? Perire!
Ebben! Quando la sorte mia,
il mio dover tal è, s'adempia, e sia!

Amelia:

Here's the ghastly field where criminals pay
for their crimes with their death!

There are the gallows, and there the plant
growing at its feet.

I must find the herb! I'm frozen with fear!
Even the sound of my own footsteps
frightens me! Everything here terrifies me!

And if I were to die now? To perish!
Very well! Is that my fate? Then let it be
fulfilled! So be it!

Andante
AMELIA



Ma dall'arido stelo divulsa
come avrò di mia mano quell' erba,
e che dentro la mente convulsa
quell' eterea sembianza morrà.
Che ti resta perduto l'amor,
che ti resta mio povero cor!

Oh! Chi piange? Qual forza m'arretra?
M'attraversa la squallida via?
Su coraggio. E tu, fatti di pietra,
non tradirmi, dal pianto ristà:
O finisci di battere e muor.
T'annienta mio povero cor!

I'll pick the magic herb with my own hands,
then my anguish will disappear,
and that wild passion
will finally end.
What will be left in my poor soul
once love is gone?

Oh! Why do I cry? What force restrains me?
What force stops me?
Have courage
and maintain your resolve,
or you will die,
your poor heart no longer beating!

A clock strikes midnight

Mezzanotte! Ah! Che veggio?
Una testa di sotterra si leva, e sospira!
Ha negli occhi il baleno dell' ira
e m'affisa e terribile sta!

Midnight! Ah! What's that I see?
A head rises from the ground and sighing!
Its raging eyes stare at me,
and it is terrifying!

Amelia falls to her knees.

Deh mi reggi, m'aita o Signor,
miserere d'un povero cor!

Ah, help me, oh Lord, and have mercy on
this poor soul!

Gustavus suddenly appears.

Gustavo:
Teco io sto.

Gustavus:
I'm with you now.

Amelia:
Gran Dio!

Amelia:
Great God!

Gustavo:
Ti calma!
Di che temi?

Gustavus:
Calm yourself!
What do you fear?

Amelia:
Ah! Mi lasciate!
Son la vittima che geme,
il mio nome almen salvate
o lo strazio ed il rossore
la mia vita abatterà.

Amelia:
Ah! Leave me!
I'm an unfortunate victim.
At least save my good name.
Don't destroy my honor.
Don't ruin my life.

Gustavo:
Io lasciarti? No, giammai:
non poss'io che m'arde in petto
immortal di te l'affetto.

Gustavus:
Leave you? Never!
I cannot, because my heart burns
with eternal love for you.

Amelia:
Sire, abbiatemi pietà.

Amelia:
Sire, have pity on me.

Gustavo:
Così parli a chi t'adora?
Pietà chiedi e tremi ancora?
Il tuo nome intemerato,
l'onor tuo sempre sarà.

Gustavus:
Is that how speak to the man who adores you?
You ask for pity yet you still tremble?
Your name and your honor
will always be pure.

Amelia:
Ma Gustavo, io son d'altrui,
dell'amico più fido.

Amelia:
But Gustavus, I belong to another,
to your most trusted friend.

Gustavo:
Taci, Amelia!

Gustavus:
Amelia, be silent!

Amelia:
Io son di lui, che daria la vita a te!

Amelia:
I belong to the man who would give his life
for you!

Gustavo:

Ah crudele, e mel rammemori,
lo ripeti innanzi a me!

Gustavus:

How cruel you are, reminding me of it
and repeating it to me!

Allegro un poco sostenuto**GUSTAVUS**

Non sai tu che se l'anima mia
il rimorso di lacera erode,
quel suo grido non cura, non ode,
sin che l'empie di fremiti amor?

Don't you realize that I'm torn by guilt and
remorse?
It is because my heart is filled with such
passion for you; it tears and gnaws at my soul.

Non sai tu che di te resteria
se cessasse di battere il cor?
Quante notti ho vegliato anelante!
Come a lungo infelice, lottai!
Quante volte dal cielo implorai
la piet  che tu chiedi da me!

Don't you know that you possess my heart,
until it stops beating?
How many nights I lie awake, yearning for
you! What anguish!
How many times I have begged heaven to
let me forget you!

Ma per questo ho potuto un istante infelice,
non viver di te?

Yet I would endure that suffering again,
for this one moment with you!

Amelia:

Ah! Deh soccorri tu, cielo, l'ambascia
di chi sta fra l'infamia e la morte.
Tu pietoso rischiara le porte
di salvezza all'errante mio pi .

Amelia:

Ah! Heaven help me. I struggle between
disgrace and death.
Show me the way to salvation,
and lead me away from sin.

E tu, va, ch'io non t'oda; mi lascia,
son di lui, che il suo sangue di  per te.

Go, so I won't have to hear your words of
love! I belong to the man who would give
his life for you.

Gustavo:

La mia vita, l'universo per un detto.

Gustavus:

I would give my life, the universe, for one
word of love from you.

Amelia:

Ciel pietoso!

Amelia:

Heaven be merciful!

Gustavo:

Di' che m'ami!

Gustavus:

Tell me that you love me!

Amelia:

Va, Gustavo!

Amelia:

Gustavus, please go!

Gustavo:

Un sol detto!

Gustavus:

Just one word!

Amelia:

Ebben, sì, t'amo!

Amelia:

Very well, yes, I love you!

Gustavo:

M'ami, Amelia!

Gustavus:

Amelia, you love me!

Amelia:

Ma tu, nobile, mi difendi dal mio cor!

Amelia:

You have a noble soul; protect me against my own heart!

Gustavo:

M'ami! Or sia distrutto il rimorso,
l'amicizia nel mio seno:
Estinto tutto, tutto sia fuorché l'amor!

Gustavus:

You love me! Then let our remorse be
extinguished.
Let there be nothing but our love!

Poco meno**GUSTAVUS and AMELIA**

O qual soave brivido
l'acceso petto irrorà!
Ah ch'io t'ascolti ancora
rispondermi così!

What sweet perfume
soothes my aching heart!
Ah, that I might hear once more
that you love me!

Astro di queste tenebre,
a cui consacro il core:
Irradiami d'amore
e più non sorga il dì!

You are my light in the darkness.
I give you my heart.
Give me your love,
and the sun need rise no more!

Amelia:

Ahi sul funereo letto
ov'io sognava spegnerlo,
gigante torna in petto
l'amor che mi ferì!

Amelia:

I tried to destroy my passion,
but it returned
more powerfully
to wound me more deeply!

Che non m'è dato in seno
a lui versar quest'anima?
O nella morte almeno
addormentarmi qui?

Either I must give
my heart and soul to you,
or I must die
to find peace.

Gustavo:
Amelia tu m'ami?

Amelia:
Sì, t'amo.

Gustavo:
Irradiami d'amor.

Amelia:
Ahimè! S'appressa alcun!

Gustavo:
Chi giunge in questo soggiorno della morte?

Gustavus:
Amelia, do you love me?

Amelia:
Yes, I love you.

Gustavus:
Illuminate me with your love.

Amelia:
Oh my! Someone is approaching!

Gustavus:
Who would come to such a dreadful place?

Gustavus scans the path and sees Anckarström approaching.

Ah, non m'inganno, tuo consorte!

Ah, I'm not mistaken, it's your husband!

Amelia:
Il mio consorte!

Amelia: (*terrified, she lowers her veil*)
My husband!

Gustavo:
Tu qui?

Gustavus: (*greeting Anckarström*)
Why are you here?

Anckarström:
Per celarti da lor; che, lassù, t'hanno in mira.

Anckarström:
I came to save you. Traitors are about to kill you.

Gustav:
Chi son?

Gustavus:
Who are they?

Anckarström:
Congiurati.

Anckarström:
Conspirators.

Amelia:
(O ciel!)

Amelia: (*aside*)
(Oh heavens!)

Anckarström:
Trasvolai nel manto serrato,
così che m'han preso per un dell'agguato,
e intesi taluno proromper: "L'ho visto:
e il Re! Un'ignota beltade è con esso."

Anckarström:
I hid nearby where they're waiting in ambush. I heard a man say, "I've seen him: it's the King! An unknown, beautiful lady is with him."

Poi altro qui volto: "fuggevole acquisto!
S'ei rade la fossa se il tenero amplesso
troncar di mia mano repente saprò."

Then another said: "Well, his conquest will be brief. He's almost in the grave. My knife will cut short their embrace."

Amelia:
(Io muoio!)

Amelia: (*aside*)
(I feel like I'm dying!)

Gustavo:
(Fa core!)

Gustavus: (*to Amelia*)
(Have courage!)

Anckarström:
Ma questo ti do.

Anckarström: (*gives Gustavus his cloak*)
Take my cloak.

E bada, lo scampo, t'è libero là.

(*He points to a footpath.*)
Escape down that path.

Gustavo:
(Salvarti degg'io!)

Gustavus: (*taking Amelia by the hand.*)
(I must save you!)

Amelia:
(Me misera! Va!)

Amelia: (*softly to Gustavus*)
(I am not worth it! You go!)

Anckarström:
Ma voi non vorrete segnarlo, o signora,
al ferro spietato!

Anckarström: (*approaching Amelia*)
My lady, persuade him to flee from his
murderers!

Anckarström goes to see if someone is coming.

Amelia:
Deh, solo t'invola!

Amelia: (*to Gustavus*)
Ah, escape by yourself!

Gustavo:
Che qui t'abbandoni?

Gustavus:
And abandon you here alone?

Amelia:
T'è libero ancora il passo. Deh! Fuggi!

Amelia:
Escape while you still can!

Gustav:
E lasciarti qui sola con esso? No, mai!
Piuttosto morirò.

Gustavus:
And leave you here alone with him?
No, never! I'd rather die.

Amelia:
O fuggi, o che il velo dal capo torrò.

Amelia:
Leave, or I'll remove my veil.

Gustav:
Che dici?

Gustavus:
What are you saying?

Amelia:
Risolvi.

Amelia:
Make up your mind.

Gustav:
Desisti.

Gustavus:
Stop it.

Amelia:

Lo vo’.

*Gustavus hesitates. As Amelia repeats her admonition, Anckarström reappears.
Gustavus approaches him.*

Amelia:

(Salvarlo a quest’alma se data sarà,
dal fiero suo fato più tema non ha.)

Gustavo:

Amico, celosa t’affido una cura:
L’amor che mi porti garante sarà.

Anckarström:

Affidati, imponi.

Gustavo:

Promettimi, giura che tu l’addurrai, velata,
in città. Nè un guardo, nè un detto su essa
trarrai.

Anckarström:

Lo giuro.

Gustavo:

E che tocche le porte n’andrai da solo
all’opposto.

Anckarström:

Lo giuro, e sarà.

Amelia:

Odi tu come fremono cupi per quest’aura
gli accenti di morte?
Di lassù, da quei negri dirupi,
il segnal de’ nemici parti.
Ne’ lor petti scintillano d’ira,
e già piomban, t’accerchiano fitti.
Al tuo capo già volser la mira.
Per pietà va, t’invola di qui.

Anckarström:

Fuggi per l’orrida via
sento l’orma de’ passi spietati.
Allo scambio dei detti esecrati
ogni destra il brando brandì.

Amelia:

It is my wish.

Amelia: *(to herself)*

(Save him, oh Lord. Save him, no matter
what becomes of me!)

Gustavus: *(to Anckarström solemnly)*

My friend, I have a delicate mission for
you. I trust your devotion to me.

Anckarström:

Trust me, command me.

Gustavus: *(pointing to Amelia)*

Promise me, and swear that you’ll lead this
veiled lady into the city, without speaking to
her, or glancing at her.

Anckarström:

I swear it.

Gustavus:

And once you reach the city gates, you will
go in an opposite direction.

Anckarström:

I swear it, and it will be so.

Amelia: *(to Gustavus)*

Do you hear the words of death that are in
the air?
Your enemies are waiting for you, up there,
in the darkness.
Their hearts are inflamed with rage,
and they’re ready to strike you down;
they’re aiming at your head already.
For heaven’s sake, get away from here.

Anckarström:

Run, run! I already hear the murderer’s
merciless footsteps.
Every one of them wields a weapon in his
right hand, while cursing you.

Va, ti salva, o che il varco all'uscita
qui fra poco serrarsi vedrai.
Va, ti salva, del popolo è vita,
questa vita che getti così.

Gustavo:

(Traditor, congiurati son essi
che minacciano il vivere mio?
Ah l'amico ho tradito pur io.
Son colui che nel cor ferì.
Innocente, sfidati gli avrei;
or d'amore colpevole, fuggo.
La pietà del Signore su lei,
posi l'ale, protegga i suoi di!)

Go, save yourself, or soon the path will
closed and there will be no escape.
Go, save your life! The future of your
country is at stake.

Gustavus: (to himself)

(So traitors and conspirators are plotting to
end my life?
Ah, I too have been a traitor.
If I were innocent,
I would stay and fight.
But my guilt makes me flee.
May the Lord show pity on her,
and protect her life!

Gustavus exits. Anckarström and Amelia are left alone.

Anckarström:

Seguitemi.

Anckarström:

Follow me.

Amelia:

(Mio Dio!)

Amelia: (to herself)

(My God!)

Anckarström:

Perchè tremate?
Fida scorta vi son. L'amico accento
vi risollevi il cor!

Anckarström:

Why are you trembling?
You can trust me. Listen, I speak as a friend.
Be calm.

*The voices of the conspirators, Horn, Ribbing, and their followers
are heard approaching.*

Cospiratori:

Avventiamoci su lui che scoccata è
l'ultim'ora.
Il saluto dell'aurora pel cadavere sarà.

Conspirators:

Let's jump on him. The clock has struck his
last hour.
His corpse will be greeted by the dawn.

Amelia:

Eccoli.

Amelia:

Here they are.

Anckarström:

Presto, appoggiatevi a me.

Anckarström:

Quickly, lean on me.

Amelia:

Morir mi sento!

Amelia:

I feel like I'm dying!

Horn:

Scerni tu quel bianco velo onde spicca la
sua dea?

Horn: (to Ribbing)

Do you see that veil? It is hiding his lady
love.

Ribbing:

Si precipiti dal cielo all'inferno.

Anckarström:

Chi va là?

Horn:

Non è desso!

Ribbing:

O furor mio!

Cospiratori:

Non è il Re!

Anckarström:

No, son io che dinanzi a voi qui sta.

Ribbing:

Il suo fido!

Horn:

Men di voi fortunati fummo noi che il sorriso d'una bella stemmo indarno ad aspettar.

Ribbing:

Io per altro il volto almeno vo' a quest'Iside mirar!

Anckarström:

Non un passo! Se l'osate traggio il ferro.

Horn:

Minacciate?

Ribbing:

Non vi temo.

Ribbing:

We'll send him from heaven to hell.

Anckarström: (*loudly*)

Who goes there?

Horn: (*recognizing Anckarström's voice*)

That's not the King!

Ribbing:

I'm enraged!

Conspirators:

It's not the King!

Anckarström:

No, it is I who stands here before you.

Ribbing: (*mockingly*)

His trusted friend!

Horn:

We're not as fortunate as you.
We couldn't persuade our sweethearts to join us here.

Ribbing:

Well, at least let me see the face of this goddess!

Anckarström: (*his hand on the hilt of his sword*)

Don't move, or I'll draw my sword.

Horn:

Are you threatening us?

Ribbing:

I'm not afraid of you.

The moonlight illuminates the scene.

Amelia:

(O cieli, aïta!)

Cospiratori:

Giù l'acciaro!

Anckarström:

Traditori!

Amelia:

(Oh heaven, help me!)

Conspirators: (*to Anckarström*)

Put down your sword!

Anckarström:

Traitors!

Ribbing:

Vo' finirla!

Ribbing: *(about to remove Amelia's veil)*

I'm going to end the mystery!

Anckarström:

E la tua vita questo insulto pagherà.

Anckarström: *(drawing his sword)*

You'll pay for this insult with your lives.

Amelia, trying to avoid bloodshed, removes her veil.

Amelia:

No, fermatevi!

Amelia:

No, stop!

Anckarström:

Che! Amelia!

Anckarström: *(shocked)*

What! Amelia!

Cospiratori:

Lei! Sua moglie!

Conspirators:

His wife!

Amelia:

(O ciel, pietà!)

Amelia:

(Oh heaven, have mercy!)

Anckarström:

Amelia!

Anckarström:

Amelia!

Horn:

Ve' se di notte qui colla sposa
l'innamorato campion si posa,
e come al raggio lunar del miele
sulle rugiade corcar si sa.

Horn: *(sarcastically)*

So our champion lover comes here with his wife!

What a honeymoon it is, on the dewy ground
and under the gallows.

Horn e Ribbing:

Ah! Ah! Ah! E che baccano sul caso strano,
e che commenti per la città!

Horn and Ribbing:

Ah! Ah! Ah! The whole city will soon be
gossiping about these strange goings-on!

Anckarström:

Così mi paga se l'ho salvato!
Ei m'ha la donna contaminato!
Per lui non posso levar la fronte,
sbranato il cor per sempre m'ha!

Anckarström:

This is how he repays me for saving his life!
He dishonors my wife!
He has humiliated me!
My best friend has broken my heart!

Amelia:

A chi nel mondo crudel più mai
misera Amelia, ti volgerai?
La tua spregiata lacrima quale
man pietosa rasciugherà?

Amelia:

I am a woman in shame.
Will my misery never end?
What pitying hand will dry my tears of
scorn?

Cospiratori:

Ve' la tragedia mutò in commedia!
Ah! Ah! Ah!

Conspirators:

See how the tragedy has transformed into
comedy! Ah! Ah! Ah!

*Anckarström approaches Horn and Ribbing,
expressing grave determination.*

Anckarström:

Converreste in casa mia sul mattino di domani?

Anckarström:

Will you meet me at my house tomorrow morning?

Horn:

Forse ammenda aver chiedete?

Horn:

Why? To demand our apology?

Anckarström:

No, ben altro in cor mi sta.

Anckarström:

No, I have a very different reason.

Horn:

Che ti punge?

Horn:

What is driving you on?

Anckarström:

Lo saprete se verete.

Anckarström:

You'll find out when you come.

Horn e Ribbing:

E ci vedrai.
Dunque andiamo: per vie diverse
l'un dall'altro s'allontani.
Il mattino di domani
grandi cose apprenderà.
Andiam.

Horn and Ribbing:

We'll be there.
Let's leave now,
each by a different path.
Tomorrow morning.
we may have great news.
Let's go.

*Horn and Ribbing depart with their fellow conspirators.
Anckarström is now alone with Amelia.*

Anckarström:

Ho giurato che alle porte v'addurrei della città.

Anckarström:

I swore that I would escort you to the city gates.

Amelia:

(Come sonito di morte la sua voce al cor mi va.)

Amelia:

(His voice is so ominous.)

Anckarström:

Andiam.

Anckarström:

Let's go.

Amelia:

Oh no, pietà!

Amelia:

Oh no, have mercy!

Anckarström:

Andiam.

Anckarström:

Let us go.

End of Act II

Act III - Scene 1

*The study in Anckarström's home. In the background there is a large portrait of King Gustavus; two large urns are prominently visible.
Anckarström enters the study with Amelia.*

Anckarström:

A tal colpa è nulla il pianto,
non la terge e non la scusa.
Ogni prece è vana omai;
sangue vuolsi e tu morrai.

Amelia:

Ma se reo, se reo soltanto e l'indizio che
m'accusa?

Anckarström:

Taci, adultera.

Amelia:

Gran Dio!

Anckarström:

Chiedi a Lui misericordia.

Amelia

E ti basta un sol sospetto?

Anckarström:

Sangue volsi.

Amelia:

E vuoi dunque il sangue mio?

Anckarström:

Tu morrai.

Amelia:

E m'infami, e più non senti
nè giustizia nè pietà?

Anckarström:

Sangue volsi e tu morrai.

Amelia:

Un istante è ver, l'amai, ma il tuo nome non
macchiai.

Anckarström:

Nothing can erase you guilt:
neither tears, nor excuses.
Your pleading is in vain:
blood must flow, and you must die.

Amelia:

You have no proof of what you are accusing
me of.

Anckarström:

Quiet, adulterous woman.

Amelia:

Great God!

Anckarström:

Ask God for mercy.

Amelia:

Would you condemn me without proof?

Anckarström:

Blood is demanded.

Amelia:

You want my blood?

Anckarström:

You will die.

Amelia:

Would you defame me unjustly and without
mercy?

Anckarström:

Blood must flow, and you must die.

Amelia:

It is true, for a moment I loved him, but I
never dishonored your name.

Anckarström:

Hai finito!

Amelia:Sallo Iddio che nel mio petto mai non arse
indegno affetto.**Anckarström:**

Hai finito! Sangue volsi e tu morrai!

Amelia:Ah! Mi sveni! Ebbene sia,
ma una grazia.**Anckarström:**

Non a me, la tua prece al ciel rivolgi.

Amelia:Solo un detto ancora a te,
m'odi l'ultimo sarà.**Anckarström:** (*grasping his sword*)

Have you finished!

Amelia:God knows that in my heart there never
burned a disgraceful affection.**Anckarström:**Have you finished! Blood must flow, and
you must die.**Amelia:**Ah! Kill me! All right, so be it,
but grant me one favor.**Anckarström:**

Direct your prayer to Heaven, not to me.

Amelia: (*kneeling before him*)Listen to me! I have but one final plea.
It will be my last request.**Andante****AMELIA**

Morrò, ma prima in grazia, deh!
Mi consenti almeno l'unico figlio mio
avvincere al mio seno.
E se alla moglie nieghi
quest'ultimo favor,
non rifiutarlo ai prieghi
del mio materno cor.

Morrò, ma queste viscere
consolino i suoi baci,
or che l'estrema è giunta
dell'ore mie fugaci.
Spenta per man del padre,
la mano ei stenderà
sugl'occhi d'una madre
che mai più non vedrà!

I will die, but be merciful, and grant one wish!
Let me embrace my only son.
Let me hold him close to me.
Don't deny your wife
her last wish.
Don't refuse the prayers
from my maternal heart.

Let my son's kisses comfort me
before I die.
The end has arrived,
and time hastens by.
Though I will die at his father's hand,
my son will stretch out his hands to me,
to embrace the mother,
who he will never see again.

Anckarström:

Alzati, là tuo figlio a te concedo riveder.
Nell'ombra e nel silenzio, là,
il tuo rossore e l'onta mia nascondi.

Anckarström:

Very well! I'll let you see your son.
But be discreet, and do not reveal
your treachery and my dishonor.

Amelia exits

Non è su lei, nel suo fragile petto che colpir
degg'io. Altro, ben altro sangue a terger
dèssi l'offesa.

I should not strike down a helpless woman.
This crime should be avenged with someone
else's blood.

Anckarström seethes as he stares at Gustavus's portrait.

Il sangue tuo!
E lo trarrà il pugnale dallo sleal tuo core:
delle lacrime mie vendicator!

With Gustavus's blood!
I'll plunge my sword into his treacherous
heart; then I will have my revenge!!

Andante sostenuto
ANCKARSTRÖM



Eri tu che macchiavi quell'anima,
la delizia dell'anima mia.
Che m'affidi e d'un tratto esecrabile
l'universo avveleni per me!

It was you who defiled the soul of the
person dearest to me.
With one abominable act,
you poisoned my entire world!

Traditor! Che compensi in tal guisa
dell'amico tuo primo la fè!

Traitor! So this is how you reward your
closest friend!

O dolcezza perdute, o memorie
d'un amplesso che l'essere india.
Quando Amelia sì bella, sì candida
sul mio seno brillava d'amor!

Oh lost paradise, oh memories.
Those cherished embraces are now lost.
Amelia was so beautiful and so radiant.
She glowed with love!

È finita, non siede che l'odio e la morte nei
vedovo cor!

That's over now. Only hatred and death
remain in my lonely heart!

O dolcezza, o speranze d'amor.

Ah lost paradise, lost hopes of love.

Horn and Ribbing enter and greet Anckarström coldly.

Anckarström:

Siam soli. Udite.
Ogni disegno vostro m'è noto.
Voi di Gustavo la morte volete.

Anckarström:

We're alone. Listen.
I know your plans.
You want to murder Gustavus.

Ribbing:

È un sogno!

Anckarström:

Ho qui le prove!

Horn:

Ed ora la trama al Re tu svelerai?

Anckarström:

No: voglio dividerla.

Horn e Ribbing:

Tu scherzi.

Anckarström:E non coi detti ma qui col fatto struggerò
i sospetti.Io son vostro, compagno m'avrete
senza posa a quest'ora di sangue.

Arra il figlio vi sia.

L'uccidete se vi manco.

Horn:

Ma tal mutamento è credibile appena.

Anckarström:

Qual fu la cagion non cercate.

Son vostro per la vita dell'unico figlio!

Horn:

Ei non mente.

Ribbing:

No, ei non mente.

Anckarström:

Esitate?

Horn e Ribbing:

Non più.

Ribbing:

It's a dream!

Anckarström: (*showing them papers*)

Here is the proof!

Horn: (*trembling*)

And now you plan to inform the King?

Anckarström:

No, I want to join you.

Horn and Ribbing:

You're joking.

Anckarström:I will prove my intentions, not with words,
but with action. (*He tears up the paper*)
I am with you. I'll be your ally in the bloody
plan.

I pledge my son's life.

Kill him if I betray you.

Horn:

I can hardly believe this change in you.

Anckarström:

Don't ask for the reason.

I am with you. I swear it on my only son's life!

Horn: (*to Ribbing*)

He isn't lying.

Ribbing: (*to Horn*)

No, he isn't lying.

Anckarström:

Are you hesitating?

Horn and Ribbing:

No longer.

Meno mosso
ANCKARSTRÖM,
HORN, RIBBING



Dun-que l'on- ta di tut - ti sol u - na, uno il cor la vendet-ta sa - rà, sarà.

Anckarström, Horn, Ribbing:

Dunque l'onta di tutti sol una,
 uno il cor la vendetta sarà,
 che tremenda, repente, digiuna
 su quel capo esecrato cadrà!

Anckarström:

D'una grazia vi supplico.

Horn:

E quale?

Anckarström:

Che sia dato d'ucciderlo a me.

Ribbing:

No, l'avito castello a me tolse
 e tal dritto a me spetta.

Horn:

Ed a me, cui spegneva il fratello
 cui decenne agonia di vendetta
 senza requie divora, qual parte assegnaste?

Anckarström:

Chetatevi, solo qui la sorte decidere de'.

Anckarström, Horn, Ribbing:

We've all suffered terrible wrongs.
 Now let's take our revenge.
 Let's vent our rage on him,
 with a swift and ferocious vengeance!

Anckarström:

I only ask one favor.

Horn:

And what is it?

Anckarström:

That I be the one who kills him.

Ribbing:

No, he expropriated my father's castle.
 I want the right to kill him.

Horn:

He had my brother murdered.
 Do you deny me revenge?

Anckarström:

We can only decide by drawing lots.

Anckarström removes an urn from the mantel and places it on the table.

Horn writes each name on a paper.

He places the three papers in the urn.

Anckarström:

E chi vieni?

Anckarström:

Who is coming?

Amelia enters. Anckarström approaches her.

Anckarström:

Tu?

Anckarström:

You?

Amelia:

V'è Oscarre che porta un invito del Re.

Amelia:

Oscar is here with an invitation from the King.

Anckarström:

Di lui! Che m'aspetti.
 E tu resta, lo dêi: Poi che parmi che il cielo
 t'ha scorta.

Anckarström: (furiously)

From him! Let him wait for me.
 You stay: Heaven seems to have guided you
 here.

Amelia:

(Qual tristezza m'assale, qual pena!
Qual terribil lampo balena Ah!)

Amelia:

(Sadness assaults me! How I am suffering!
Their threatening looks make me tremble!)

Anckarström:

Nulla sa: non temete. Costei esser debbe
anzi l'auspice lieto.

Anckarström: (*pointing to Amelia*)

Don't worry: she knows nothing. Indeed,
she is a providential omen.

*Anckarström pulls Amelia towards the table, speaking softly
but with a terrifying expression on his face.*

V'ha tre nomi in quell'urna: un nè tragga
l'innocente tua mano.

There are three names in that urn: let your
innocent hand draw one of the three.

Amelia:

E perchè?

Amelia: (*trembling*)

Why?

Anckarström:

Obbedisci:- non chieder di più.

Anckarström: (*scowling at her*)

Obey me, and don't ask questions.

Amelia:

(Non è dubbio: il feroce decreto mi vuol
parte ad un'opra di sangue.)

Amelia:

(There's no doubt that he wants to involve
me in bloodshed.)

Amelia slowly approaches the urn. Anckarström stares at her menacingly.

Her hand trembles as she removes a paper from the urn.

Anckarström takes the paper and hands it to Horn.

Anckarström:

Qual è dunque l'eletto?

Anckarström: (*with agitation*)

Which of us has been chosen?

Horn:

Renato!

Horn: (*sadly*)

Renato!

Anckarström:

Il mio nome! O giustizia del fato;
la vendetta mi deleghi tu!

Anckarström: (*with exultation*)

My name! Justice! Destiny has granted me
my revenge!

Amelia:

(Ah! Del Re la morte si vuole!
Nol celâr le crudeli parole!
Su quel capo snudati dall'ira
i lor ferri scintillano già!)

Amelia: (*aside*)

(Ah! They want to kill the King!
Their savage words confirm it!
Their gleaming swords are unsheathed,
poised to take his life!)

Anckarström, Horn, Ribbing:

Sconterà dell'America il pianto
lo sleal che ne fece suo vanto.
Se traffisse, soccomba trafitto
tal mercede pagata gli va!

Anckarström, Horn, Ribbing:

The traitor who boasted of the love of his
subjects, will answer to them:
let him be killed, exactly as he killed;
let him receive his just reward!

Oscar enters, and immediately approaches Amelia.

Anckarström:

Il messaggio entri!

Oscar:

Alle danze questa sera, se gradite,
cib lo sposo il mio signore vi desidera.

Amelia:

No! posso.

Anckarström:

Anche il Re vi sarà?

Oscar:

Certo.

Horn, Ribbing:

(Oh sorte!)

Anckarström:

Tanto invito so che valga.

Oscar:

È un ballo in maschera splendidissimo

Anckarström:

Benissimo!

Ella meco intervverrà!

Amelia:

(Gran Dio!)

Horn, Ribbing:

E noi pur, se da quell'abito più spedito il
colpo va.

Oscar:

Ah! Di che fulgor, che musiche esulteran le
soglie,
ove di tante giovani bellezze il fior
s'accoglie, di quante altrice palpita ah!
Questa gentil città!

Amelia:

(Ed io medesima, io misera,
lo scritto inesorato trassi dall'urna complice
pel mio consorte irato:
Su cui del cor più nobile
ferma la morte sta.)

Anckarström: *(at the door)*

Let the messenger enter!

Oscar: *(to Amelia)*

My master invites you and your husband to
come to the ball this evening.

Amelia: *(irritated)*

We can't accept.

Oscar:

Will the King be there?

Oscar:

Certainly.

Horn, Ribbing: *(among themselves)*

(What luck!

Anckarström: *(looking at the conspirators)*

I'm delighted by the invitation.

Oscar:

It'll be a splendid masked ball.

Anckarström: *(indicating Amelia)*

Excellent!

My wife and I will be there!

Amelia:

(Great God!)

Horn Ribbing:

And so will we. This time, we'll kill him
without fail.

Oscar:

Ah! How festive it will be, with bright lights
and music.
Beautiful women will gather there,
and so many other beauties who grace and
invigorate our city!

Amelia: *(to herself)*

(And wretched me, I was an accomplice
who picked my enraged husband's name
from the urn.
Must I now witness my own husband killing
the noblest of men?)

Anckarström:

(Là fra le danza esanime la mente mia sel
pinge, ove del proprio sangue il pavimento
tinge, spira dator d'infamie
senza trovar pietà.)

Horn, Ribbing:

Una vendetta in domino
è ciò che torna all'uopo.
Fra l'urto delle maschere
non fallirà lo scopo.
Sarà una danza funebre
con pallide beltà.

Amelia:

(Prevenirlo potessi, e non tradire
lo sposo mio!)

Oscar:

Reina della festa sarete.

Amelia:

(Forse potrallo Ulrica.)

Horn, Ribbing:

E qual costume indosserem?

Anckarström:

Azzurra la veste e da vermiglio nastro le
ciarpe al manco lato attorte.

Horn, Ribbing:

E qual accento a ravvisarci?

Anckarström:

"Morte!"

Amelia:

(Prevenirlo potessi!)

Anckarström, Horn, Ribbing:

"Morte!"

Anckarström:

(My mind can envision the scene during the
festivities: the death of this disgraceful and
unmerciful man, his corpse surrounded by
his blood.)

Horn, Ribbing: *(among themselves)*

We'll have our revenge
at the masked ball.
We will not fail in our objectives.
The festive dancing of the maskers,
will transform into
a dance of death.

Amelia: *(to herself)*

(If I could only warn him without betraying
my husband!)

Oscar: *(to Amelia)*

You will be queen of the ball.

Amelia: *(to herself)*

(Maybe Ulrica can warn him.)

Horn, Ribbing: *(to Anckarström)*

What costume will we wear?

Anckarström:

A blue robe with a scarlet ribbon.

Horn, Ribbing:

And what is our password?

Anckarström:

"Death!"

Amelia:

(If I could only warn him!)

Anckarström, Horn, Ribbing:

"Death!"

End of Act III - Scene 1

Act III - Scene 2

A sumptuous room in Gustavus's palace; a writing table is prominent.

Gustavo:

Forse la soglia attinse e posa alfin.
L'onore ed il dover fra i nostri petti han
rotto l'abisso.
Ah! Sì, Renato rivedrà Finlandia e la sua
sposa lo seguirà.
Senza un addio, l'immenso ocean ne separi
e taccia il core.

Gustavus:

Perhaps she's resting, safely at home.
Honor and duty have forced us to separate
forever.
Ah! Yes, I'll send her husband back to his
native Finland, and his wife will go with him.
There'll be no farewells: the immense ocean
will separate us, and I will find peace.

Gustavus begins writing an order. But as he is about to sign it, he drops the pen.

Esito ancor, ma, oh ciel, non lo degg'io?

Why do I still hesitate? It's my duty!

He signs the document and then places it inside his coat.

Ah l'ho segnato il sacrificio mio!

Ah, I have signed my own sacrifice!

Andante
GUSTAVUS



Ma se m'è forza perderti per sempre, o luce
mia, a te verrà il mio palpito sotto qual ciel
tu sia, chiusa la tua memoria nell'intimo del
cor.

I must lose you for ever, my beloved.
But my love will reach you wherever you
are. My memories of you will be locked in
my heart.

Ed or qual reo presagio lo spirito m'assale,
che il rivederti annunzia quasi un desio
fatale.
Come se fosse l'ultima ora del nostro amor?

But what is this terrible premonition?
It is as though my longing to see her was a
fatal wish;
as if it was the very last hour of our love!

Dance music is heard from the Masked Ball that is already in progress.

Ah! Dessa è là, potrei vederla, ancora
riparlarle potrei.
Ma no: ché tutto mi strappa da lei.

Ah! She is at the ball; I could see her again,
and I could speak with her.
But no: I must tear myself away from her.

Oscar enters bearing a note for Gustavus.

Oscar:

Ignota donna questo foglio diemmi.
"È pel Conte," diss'ella; "a lui lo reca
e di celato."

Oscar:

A masked lady gave me this note:
"It is for the King," she said; "take it to him
in secret."

Gustavo:

(Che nel ballo alcuno alla mia vita attenterà,
sta detto.

Ma se m'arresto: ch'io pavento diran.

Nol vo': nessuno pur sospettarlo de'.)

Tu, va: t'appresta, e ratto per gioir meco alla
festa.

Gustavus: *(after reading the paper)*

(She has said that someone will make an
attempt on my life during the ball.

But if I stay away, I'll be deemed a coward.

I don't want that. No one must suspect anything.)

You, hurry and get yourself dressed.

You'll enjoy the ball with me.

Oscar exits. Gustavus erupts excitedly.

Sì, rivederti, Amelia, e nella tua beltà,
anche una volta l'anima d'amor mi brillerà!

Amelia, I'll see you once again, and once
more, your beauty will kindle my heart!

End of Act III - Scene 2

Act III - Scene 3

*The Masked Ball. Lively music is being played in a sumptuous, splendidly lighted ballroom.
The guests are masked and wear colorful costumes.
There is a feeling of genuine merriment pervading the scene.*

Tutti:

Fervono amori e danze nelle felici stanze,
fervono amori onde la vita è solo un sogno
lusinghier.
Notte de' cari istanti, de' palpiti de' canti,
perchè non fermi il volo sull'onda del
piacer?

All:

Impassioned love and dancing abounds:
that impassioned love transforming life into
a seductive dream.
It is a night of precious moments and
pulsating songs, the joy and pleasure
endless.

*Horn, Ribbing, and their fellow conspirators wear blue domino costumes with scarlet
sashes. Anckarström wears the same costume and walks about slowly.*

Horn:

Altro de' nostri è questo.

Horn: (*pointing out Anckarström*)

One of our men.

He approaches Anckarström and whispers to him.

Morte!

Death!

Anckarström:

Sì: morte. Ma non verrà.

Anckarström: (*bitterly*)

Yes: death! But he will not come.

Horn e Ribbing:

Che parli?

Horn and Ribbing:

What do you mean?

Anckarström:

Qui l'aspettarlo è vano.

Anckarström:

It's futile to wait for him.

Horn:

Come?

Horn:

Why?

Ribbing:

Perchè?

Ribbing:

Why?

Anckarström:

Vi basti saperlo altrove.

Anckarström:

He's someplace else.

Horn:

O sorte ingannatrice!

Horn:

Fate has cheated us!

Ribbing:

E sempre ne sfuggirà di mano!

Ribbing: (*furiously*)

He always slips through our hands!

Anckarström:
Parlate basso; alcuno lo sguardo a noi fermò.

Horn:
E chi?

Anckarström:
Quello a sinistra dal breve domino.

Anckarström:
Quiet, someone may over hear us.

Horn:
Who?

Anckarström: (*pointing to Oscar*)
That one on the left, with the short domino costume.

*Horn and Ribbing disappear into the crowd.
Oscar, also masked, follows Anckarström, and then approaches him*

Oscar:
Più non ti lascio, o maschera; mal ti nascondi.

Anckarström:
Eh via!

Oscar:
Tu se' Renato.

Anckarström:
E Oscarre tu sei!

Oscar:
Qual villania!

Anckarström:
Ma bravo, e ti par dunque convenienza questa, che mentre il Re dorme, tu scivoli alla festa?

Oscar:
Il Re è qui.

Anckarström:
Ch! Dove?

Oscar:
L'ho detto.

Anckarström:
Ebben! Qual'è?

Oscar:
Non vel dirò!

Oscar:
I know who you are. You're not well disguised.

Anckarström: (*trying to avoid Oscar*)
Ah, go away!

Oscar: (*following him*)
You are Renato.

Anckarström: (*lifting Oscar's mask*)
And you are Oscar!

Oscar:
What rudeness!

Anckarström:
You rascal! You sneak out to the ball while your master is asleep.

Oscar:
The King is here.

Anckarström: (*startled*)
What! Where?

Oscar:
I told you.

Anckarström:
All right! Which one is he?

Oscar:
That I won't tell you!

Anckarström:

Gran cosa!

Anckarström:

Big deal!

Oscar:

Cercatelo da voi!

Oscar: (*turning away*)

Find him yourself!

Anckarström:

Orsù!

Anckarström: (*amicably*)

Come now!

Oscar:

E per fargli il tiro che regalaste a me?

Oscar:

What will you give me if I tell you?

Anckarström:

Via calmati: almen dirme del suo costume puoi?

Anckarström:

Come, calm yourself: at least describe his costume to me.

Allegretto**OSCAR****Oscar:**Saper voreste di che si veste,
quando l'è cosa ch'ei vuol nascosa.

Oscar lo sa, ma nol dirà,

Tra la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

Oscar: (*jokingly*)

So you want to know how he is dressed.

But that's just what he wants to hide.

Oscar knows, but he won't tell.

Tra la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

Pieno d'amore mi balza il core,

ma pur discreto serba il secreto.

Nol rapirà grado o beltà,

Tra la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

Though I'm the friendliest of fellows,

I'd never divulge a secret.

Not for love or money!

Tra la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

*Groups of dancing couples cross between Oscar and Anckarström, separating them.
Afterwards, Anckarström finds Oscar again.*

Anckarström:

So che tu sai distinguere gli amici suoi.

Anckarström:

You know I'm his most trusted friend.

Oscar:V'alletta interrogarlo, e forse celiar con esso
un po'?**Oscar:**Do you want to question him or just tease
him a little?**Anckarström:**

Appunto.

Anckarström:

Exactly.

Oscar:

E compromettere di poi chi ve l'ha detto?

Anckarström:

M'offendi. È confidenza che quanto importi so.

Oscar:

Vi preme assai.

Anckarström:

Degg'io di gravi cose ad esso, pria che la notte inoltri, qui favellar. Su te farò cader la colpa, se non mi fia concesso.

Oscar:

Dunque...

Anckarström:

Fai grazia a lui, se parli, e non a me.

Oscar:

Veste una cappa nera, con roseo nastro al petto.

Anckarström:

Una parola ancora.

Oscar:

Più che abbastanza ho detto.

Oscar:

And then tell him that I gave him away?

Anckarström:

Don't insult me. I respect a confidence.

Oscar:

You're being very insistent.

Anckarström:

I have serious matters to discuss with him. If you don't help me, you'll be the blame if something terrible happens.

Oscar:

In that case...

Anckarström:

You'll be doing him a favor if you tell me.

Oscar:

He's wearing a black cape with a red ribbon.

Anckarström:

One more word.

Oscar:

I've said too much already.

Oscar disappears in the crowd. Gustavus enters. He wears a black domino costume adorned with a red ribbon. He is in deep thought. Amelia walks behind him.

Amelia:

Ah! Perché qui! Fuggite.

Gustavo:

Sei quella delo scritto?

Amelia:

La morte qui v'accerchia.

Gustavo:

Non penetra nel mio petto il terror.

Amelia:

Fuggite, fuggite, o che trafitto cadrete qui!

Amelia:

Ah! Why did you come here! Flee!

Gustavus:

Did you write that note to me?

Amelia:

Death threatens you here.

Gustavus:

I have no fear.

Amelia:

Leave! Leave or you'll be killed!

Gustavo:
Rivelami il nome tuo.

Amelia:
Gran Dio! Nol posso.

Gustavo:
E perchè piangi, mi supplichi atterrita?
Onde cotanta senti pietà della mia vita?

Amelia:
Tutto per essa, il sangue mio darei!

Gustavo:
Invan ti celi, Amelia: quell'angelo tu sei!

Amelia:
T'amo, sì, t'amo, e in lacrime a' piedi tuoi
m'atterro,
ove t'anela incognito della vendetta il ferro.
Cadavere domani sarai se qui rimani.
Salvati, va, mi lascia, fuggi dall'odio lor.

Gustavo:
Sin che tu m'ami, Amelia, non curo il fato
mio.

Amelia:
Fuggi.

Gustavo:
Non ho che te nell'anima e l'universo
obblio.

Amelia:
Salvati.

Gustavo:
Nè so temer la morte, perchè di lei più forte
è l'aura che m'inebria del tuo divino amor.

Amelia:
Dunque vedermi vuoi d'affanno morta e di
vergogna?

Gustavo:
Salva ti vo'. Domani con Renato andrai.

Gustavus:
Tell me your name.

Amelia:
Great God! I cannot!

Gustavus:
Why are you crying?
Why are you so concerned for my life?

Amelia: *(amid sobs, revealing her real voice)*
I'd give my own life if you'd leave.

Gustavus:
You can't disguise yourself from me, my
dearest Amelia!

Amelia:
I love you. Leave, I beg you, prostrate at
your feet and in tears.
There's a plot to kill you tonight.
You'll be dead by morning if you stay here.
Leave this place and save your life.

Gustavus:
As long as you love me, Amelia, I don't care
about my fate.

Amelia:
Flee from here.

Gustavus:
When I have only you in my soul, I forget
about the rest of the world.

Amelia:
Save yourself.

Gustavus:
I have no fear, because love is stronger than
death! I'm intoxicated by this blessed love.

Amelia:
Do you want me to die in dishonor and
shame??

Gustavus:
I've saved you. Tomorrow, you'll leave with
your husband.

Amelia:
Dove?

Amelia:
Where?

Gustavo:
Al natio tuo cielo.

Gustavus:
To your own heaven.

Amelia:
In Finlandia!

Amelia:
To Finland!

Gustavo:
Mi schianto il cor, ma partirai,
ma addio.

Gustavus:
It breaks my heart, but you must leave.
Farewell!

Amelia:
Gustavo!

Amelia:
Gustavo!

Gustavo:
Vi lascio, Amelia. Anco una volta addio,
l'ultima volta addio!

Gustavus:
I must leave you, Amelia. Once more,
farewell, for the last time, farewell!

Gustavus and Amelia do not see Anckarström stalking them. Anckarström suddenly places himself between them, and stabs Gustavo.

Anckarström:
E tu ricevi il mio!

Anckarström:
And this is my farewell to you!

Gustav:
Ahimè!

Gustavus:
Alas!

Amelia:
Soccorso!

Amelia: (*screaming to the others*)
Help!

Oscar:
Oh ciel! Ei trucidato!

Oscar: (*approaching the King*)
Oh heavens! The King has been murdered!

Guards, ladies and officers enter from other rooms.

Tutti:
Da chi? Dov'è l'infame?

All:
By whom? Where is the heinous murderer?

*Horn and Ribbing are seen in the background.
Oscar points to Anckarström as Gustavus's assassin.*

Oscar:
Ecco!

Oscar: (*ripping off Anckarström's mask*)
Here he is!

Tutti:
Renato! Ah, morte infamia sul traditor!
L'acciara vendicator!
Morte al traditor!

All:
Renato! Death to the infamous traitor!
Let the sword provide revenge!
Death to the traitor!

Gustavo:
No, lasciatelo!

Gustavus removes a document from his coat, and signals Anckarström to come closer.

Tu m'odi ancor.
Ella è pura; in braccio a morte.
Te lo giuro, Iddio m'ascolta.

Gustavus:
No, let him go!

Listen to me now.
She is innocent. I swear it to you with my
dying breath. May God be my witness.

Andante
GUSTAVUS



Io che amai la tua consorte rispettato ho il
suo candor.
A novello incarco ascenso tu con lei partir
dovevi.
Io l'amai, ma volli illeso il tuo nome ed il
suo cor.

I loved your wife,
yet I respected her honor.
I had assigned you to a new post. You were
to leave with her.
I loved her, but I would not stain your honor,
or hers.

Amelia:
O rimorsi dell'amor che divorano il mio cor,
fra un colpevole che sanguina e la vittima
che muor!

Amelia:
How my heart is torn by remorse!
There lies the dying victim, and beside him,
the murderer!

Oscar:
O dolor senza misura, o terribile sventura!
La sua fronte è tutta rorida già dell'ultimo
sudor.

Oscar:
Oh immeasurable grief, oh terrible misfortune!
His forehead is soaked with his last
perspiration.

Anckarström:
Ciel, che feci! E che m'aspetta esecrato
sulla terra!
Di qual sangue e qual vendetta m'assetò
l'infausto error!

Anckarström:
Heaven, what I have done! And what awaits
me, hated here on earth!
My thirst for vengeance caused this horrible
mistake!

Gustavo:
Grazia a ognun, signor qui sono:
tutti assolve il mio perdono.

Gustavus:
Thank you. I'm still master here, and I
pardon all of you.

Coro:
Cor sì grande e generoso
tu ci serba, o Dio pietoso:
Raggio in terra a noi miserrimi
è del tuo celeste amor!

Chorus:
Oh merciful God, save this noble, generous
soul!
Let Thy divine love shine on these wretched
souls here on earth!

Gustavo:
Addio per sempre, miei figli...

Tutti:
Ei muore!

Gustavo:
Addio, diletta patria!
Addio, miei figli, per sempre ah!
Ohimè, io moro!
Addio!

Tutti:
Notte d'orrore!

Gustavus:
Farewell for ever, my children...

All:
He is dying!

Gustavus:
Farewell, beloved country !
Farewell, my children, forever ah!
Alas, I am dying!
Farewell!

All:
Night of horror!

End of Opera

Discography

- 1940 Milanov (Amelia); Bjoerling (Riccardo); Sved (Renato); Andrega (Oscar);
Castagna (Ulrica);
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Chorus;
Panizza (Conductor)
- 1943 Caniglia (Amelia); Gigli (Riccardo); Bechi (Renato); Ribetti (Oscar);
Barbieri (Ulrica); Pasero (Silvano);
Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra;
Serafin (Conductor)
- 1947 (Live Metropolitan Opera)
Ilitsch (Amelia) Peerce (Riccardo); Warren (Renato); Harshaw (Ulrica);
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Chorus;
Antonicelli (Conductor)
- 1951 Semser (Amelia); Kérol (Riccardo); Borthayre (Renato); Valdarini (Oscar);
Cahn (Ulrica); Mans (Silvano);
French Radio Orchestra and Chorus;
Leibowitz (Conductor)
- 1954 (NBC Broadcast)
Nelli (Amelia); Peerce (Riccardo); Merrill (Renato); Haskins (Oscar);
Turner (Ulrica); Moscona (Sam); Scott (Tom);
NBC Orchestra; Shaw Chorale;
Toscanini (Conductor)
- 1954 Curtis Verna (Amelia); Tagliavini (Riccardo); Valdengo (Renato);
Erato (Oscar); Tassinari (Ulrica); Stefanoni (Sam); Susca (Tom);
Turin Radio Orchestra and Chorus;
Questa (Conductor)
- 1954 Dezi (Amelia); Bardi (Riccardo); Mazzini (Renato); Guido (Oscar)
Sawyer (Ulrica);
Rome Eliseo Theatre Orchestra and Chorus;
Marini (Conductor)
- 1955 (Live Metropolitan Opera performance)
Milanov (Amelia); Tucker (Riccardo); Metternich (Renato);
Peters (Oscar); Madeira (Ulrica);
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Chorus;
Mitropoulos (Conductor)
- 1956 Callas (Amelia); di Stefano (Riccardo); Gobbi (Renato);
Ratti (Oscar); Barbieri (Ulrica); Maionica (Sam); Zaccaria (Tom);
La Scala Orchestra and Chorus;
Votto (Conductor)

- 1957 (Live La Scala Performance)
Callas (Amelia); di Stefano (Riccardo); Bastianini (Renato); Ratti (Oscar);
Simionato (Ulrica); Cassinelli (Sam); Stefanoni (Tom);
La Scala Orchestra and Chorus;
Gavazzeni (Conductor)
- 1960 Stella (Amelia); Poggi (Riccardo); Bastianini (Renato);
Tavolaccini (Oscar); Lazzarini (Ulrica); Cassinelli (Sam) Maionica (Tom);
La Scala Orchestra and Chorus;
Gavazzeni (Conductor)
- 1961 Nilsson (Amelia); Bergonzi (Riccardo); MacNeil (Renato); Stahlman (Oscar);
Simionato (Ulrica); Corena (Sam); Arbace (Tom);
Santa Cecilia Academy Orchestra and Chorus;
Solti (Conductor)
- 1966 L. Price (Amelia); Bergonzi (Riccardo); Merrill (Renato); Grist (Oscar);
Verrett (Ulrica); Flagello (Sam); Mazzoli (Tom);
RCA Italiana Orchestra and Chorus;
Leinsdorf (Conductor)
- 1970 Tebaldi (Amelia); Pavarotti (Riccardo); Milnes (Renato); Donath (Oscar);
Resnik (Ulrica); Monreale (Sam); Christou (Tom);
Santa Cecilia Academy Orchestra and Chorus;
Bartoletti (Conductor)
- 1975 Arroyo (Amelia); Domingo (Riccardo); Cappuccilli (Renato); Grist (Oscar);
Cossotto (Ulrica); Howell (Sam); van Allan (Tom);
Royal Opera Chorus; New Philharmonia Orchestra;
Muti (Conductor)
- 1979 Caballé (Amelia); Carreras (Riccardo); Wixell (Renato); Ghazarian (Oscar);
Payne (Ulrica);
Royal Opera Orchestra and Chorus;
C. Davis (Conductor)
- 1980 Ricciarelli (Amelia); Domingo (Riccardo); Bruson (Renato);
Gruberova (Oscar); Obraztsova (Ulrica);
La Scala Orchestra and Chorus;
Abbado (Conductor)
- 1982 M. Price (Amelia); Pavarotti (Riccardo) Bruson (Renato);
Battle (Oscar); Ludwig (Ulrica);
National Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus
Solti (Conductor)

- 1989 Barstow (Amelia); Domingo (Riccardo); Nucci (Renato); Jo (Oscar)
 Quivar (Ulrica);
 Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra
 von Karajan (Conductor)
- 1991 Millo (Amelia); Pavarotti (Riccardo); Nucci (Renato);
 Blackwell (Oscar); Quivar (Ulrica);
 Metropolitan Opera; Levine (Conductor)
- 1995 Crider (Amelia); Leech (Riccardo); Chernov (Renato)
 Welsh National Opera;
 Rizzi (Conductor)

Videography

Pioneer DVD (1975)

Ricciarelli (Amelia); Domingo (Riccardo); Cappuccilli (Renato);
Grist (Oscar);
Covent Garden;
Abbado (Conductor)

DG VHS and DVD (1991)

Milo (Amelia); Pavarotti (Gustavus); Nucci (Anckarström);
Blackwell (Oscar); Quivar (Ulrica); Wells (Ribbing); Cook (Horn);
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Chorus;
Levine (Conductor);
Faggioni (Director);
Large (Video Director)

DICTIONARY OF OPERA AND MUSICAL TERMS

Accelerando - Play the music faster, but gradually.

Adagio - At a slow or gliding tempo, not as slow as largo, but not as fast as andante.

Agitato - Restless or agitated.

Allegro - At a brisk or lively tempo, faster than andante but not as fast as presto.

Andante - A moderately slow, easy-going tempo.

Appoggiatura - An extra or embellishing note preceding a main melodic note. Usually written as a note of smaller size, it shares the time value of the main note.

Arabesque - Flourishes or fancy patterns usually applying to vocal virtuosity.

Aria - A solo song usually structured in a formal pattern. Arias generally convey reflective and introspective thoughts rather than descriptive action.

Arietta - A shortened form of aria.

Arioso - A musical passage or composition having a mixture of free recitative and metrical song.

Arpeggio - Producing the tones of a chord in succession rather than simultaneously.

Atonal - Music that is not anchored in traditional musical tonality; it does not use the diatonic scale and has no keynote or tonal center.

Ballad opera - Eighteenth-century English opera consisting of spoken dialogue and music derived from popular ballad and folksong sources. The most famous is *The Beggar's Opera*, which is a satire of the Italian opera seria.

Bar - A vertical line across the stave that divides the music into measures.

Baritone - A male singing voice ranging between bass and tenor.

Baroque - A style of artistic expression prevalent in the 17th century that is marked by the use of complex forms, bold ornamentation, and florid decoration. The Baroque period extends from approximately 1600 to 1750 and includes the works of the original creators of modern opera, the Camerata, as well as the later works by Bach and Handel.

Bass - The lowest male voice, usually divided into categories such as:

Basso buffo - A bass voice that specializes in comic roles: Dr. Bartolo in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*.

Basso cantante - A bass voice that demonstrates melodic singing quality: King Philip in Verdi's *Don Carlos*.

Basso profondo - the deepest, most profound, or most dramatic of bass voices: Sarastro in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Bel canto - Literally, "beautiful singing." It originated in Italian opera of the 17th and 18th centuries and stressed beautiful tones produced with ease, clarity, purity, and evenness, together with an agile vocal technique and virtuosity. Bel canto flourished in the first half of the 19th century in the works of Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti.

Cabaletta - A lively, concluding portion of an aria or duet. The term is derived from the Italian word "cavallo," or horse: it metaphorically describes a horse galloping to the finish line.

Cadenza - A flourish or brilliant part of an aria (or concerto) commonly inserted just before a finale. It is usually performed without accompaniment.

Camerata - A gathering of Florentine writers and musicians between 1590 and 1600 who attempted to recreate what they believed was the ancient Greek theatrical synthesis of drama, music, and stage spectacle; their experimentation led to the creation of the early structural forms of modern opera.

Cantabile - An indication that the singer should sing sweetly.

Cantata - A choral piece generally containing Scriptural narrative texts: the *St. Matthew Passion* of Bach.

Cantilena - Literally, "little song." A lyrical melody meant to be played or sung "cantabile," or with sweetness and expression.

Canzone - A short, lyrical operatic song usually containing no narrative association with the drama but rather simply reflecting the character's state of mind: Cherubino's "Voi che sapete" in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Castrato - A young male singer who was surgically castrated to retain his treble voice.

Cavatina - A short aria popular in 18th and 19th century opera that usually heralded the entrance of a principal singer.

Classical Period - A period roughly between the Baroque and Romantic periods, the late 18th through the early 19th centuries. Stylistically, the music of the period stresses clarity, precision, and rigid structural forms.

Coda - A trailer added on by the composer after the music's natural conclusion. The coda serves as a formal closing to the piece.

Coloratura - Literally, "colored": it refers to a soprano singing in the bel canto tradition. It is a singing technique that requires great agility, virtuosity, embellishments and ornamentation: The Queen of the Night's aria, "Zum Leiden bin ich auserkoren," from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Commedia dell'arte - A popular form of dramatic presentation originating in Renaissance Italy in which highly stylized characters were involved in comic plots involving mistaken identities and misunderstandings. Two of the standard characters were Harlequin and Colombine: The "play within a play" in Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*.

Comprimario - A singer who performs secondary character roles such as confidantes, servants, and messengers.

Continuo, Basso continuo - A bass part (as for a keyboard or stringed instrument) that was used especially in baroque ensemble music; it consists of an independent succession of bass notes that indicate the required chords and their appropriate harmonies. Also called *figured bass*, *thoroughbass*.

Contralto - The lowest female voice, derived from "contra" against, and "alto" voice; a voice between the tenor and mezzo-soprano.

Countertenor - A high male voice generally singing within the female high soprano ranges.

Counterpoint - The combination of two or more independent melodies into a single harmonic texture in which each retains its linear character. The most sophisticated form of counterpoint is the fugue form, in which from two to six melodies can be used; the voices are combined, each providing a variation on the basic theme but each retaining its relation to the whole.

Crescendo - A gradual increase in the volume of a musical passage.

Da capo - Literally, "from the top"; repeat. Early 17th-century da capo arias were in the form of A B A, with the second A section repeating the first, but with ornamentation.

Deus ex machina - Literally "god out of a machine." A dramatic technique in which a person or thing appears or is introduced suddenly and unexpectedly; it provides a contrived solution to an apparently insoluble dramatic difficulty.

Diatonic - A major or minor musical scale that comprises intervals of five whole steps and two half steps.

Diminuendo - Gradually becoming softer; the opposite of crescendo.

Dissonance - A mingling of discordant sounds that do not harmonize within the diatonic scale.

Diva - Literally, “goddess”; generally the term refers to a leading female opera star who either possesses, or pretends to possess, great rank.

Dominant - The fifth tone of the diatonic scale; in the key of C, the dominant is G.

Dramatic soprano or tenor - A voice that is powerful, possesses endurance, and is generally projected in a declamatory style.

Dramma giocoso - Literally, “amusing (or humorous) drama.” An opera whose story combines both serious and comic elements: Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*.

Falsetto - A lighter or “false” voice; an artificially-produced high singing voice that extends above the range of the full voice.

Fioritura - It., “flowering”; a flowering ornamentation or embellishment of the vocal line within an aria.

Forte, fortissimo - Forte (*f*) means loud; mezzo forte (*mf*) is fairly loud; fortissimo (*ff*) is even louder; additional *fff*’s indicate greater degrees of loudness.

Glissando - Literally, “gliding.” A rapid sliding up or down the scale.

Grand opera - An opera in which there is no spoken dialogue and the entire text is set to music, frequently treating serious and tragic subjects. Grand opera flourished in France in the 19th century (Meyerbeer); the genre is epic in scale and combines spectacle, large choruses, scenery, and huge orchestras.

Heldentenor - A tenor with a powerful dramatic voice who possesses brilliant top notes and vocal stamina. Heldentenors are well suited to heroic (Wagnerian) roles: Lauritz Melchior in Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*.

Imbrogllo - Literally, “intrigue”; an operatic scene portraying chaos and confusion, with appropriate diverse melodies and rhythms.

Largo or larghetto - Largo indicates a very slow tempo, broad and with dignity. Larghetto is at a slightly faster tempo than largo.

Legato - Literally, “tied” or “bound”; successive tones that are connected smoothly. The opposite of legato is staccato (short and plucked tones.)

Leitmotif - Literally, “leading motive.” A musical fragment characterizing a person, thing, feeling, or idea that provides associations when it recurs.

Libretto - Literally, “little book”; the text of an opera.

Lied - A German song; the plural is “lieder.” Originally, a German art song of the late 18th century.

Lyric - A voice that is light and delicate.

Maestro - From the Italian “master”; a term of respect to conductors, composers, directors, and great musicians.

Melodrama - Words spoken over music. Melodrama appears in Beethoven’s *Fidelio* and flourished during the late 19th century in the operas of Massenet (*Manon* and *Werther*).

Mezza voce - Literally, “medium voice”; singing with medium or half volume. It is sometimes intended as a vocal means to intensify emotion.

Mezzo-soprano - A woman’s voice with a range between soprano and contralto.

Obbligato - An accompaniment to a solo or principal melody that is usually played by an important, single instrument.

Octave - A musical interval embracing eight diatonic degrees; from C to C is an octave.

Opera - Literally, “work”; a dramatic or comic play in which music is the primary vehicle that conveys its story.

Opera buffa - Italian comic opera that flourished during the bel canto era. Highlighting the opera buffa genre were buffo characters who were usually basses singing patter songs: Dr. Bartolo in Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*; Dr. Dulcamara in Donizetti’s *The Elixir of Love*.

Opéra comique - A French opera characterized by spoken dialogue interspersed between the musical numbers, as opposed to grand opera in which there is no spoken dialogue. Opéra comique subjects can be either comic or tragic.

Operetta, or light opera - Operas that contain comic elements and generally a light romantic plot: Strauss’s *Die Fledermaus*, Offenbach’s *La Périchole*, and Lehar’s *The Merry Widow*. In operettas, there is usually much spoken dialogue, dancing, practical jokes, and mistaken identities.

Oratorio - A lengthy choral work, usually of a religious nature and consisting chiefly of recitatives, arias, and choruses, but performed without action or scenery: Handel's *Messiah*.

Ornamentation - Extra embellishing notes—appoggiaturas, trills, roulades, or cadenzas—that enhance a melodic line.

Overture - The orchestral introduction to a musical dramatic work that sometimes incorporates musical themes within the work. Overtures are instrumental pieces that are generally performed independently of their respective operas in concert.

Parlando - Literally, “speaking”; the imitation of speech while singing, or singing that is almost speaking over the music. Parlando sections are usually short and have minimal orchestral accompaniment.

Patter song - A song with words that are rapidly and quickly delivered. Figaro's “Largo al factotum” in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* is a patter song.

Pentatonic - A five-note scale. Pentatonic music is most prevalent in Far Eastern countries.

Piano - A performance indication for soft volume.

Pitch - The property of a musical tone that is determined by the frequency of the waves producing it.

Pizzicato - An indication that notes are to be played by plucking the strings instead of stroking the string with the bow.

Polyphony - Literally, “many voices.” A style of musical composition in which two or more independent melodies are juxtaposed; counterpoint.

Polytonal - Several tonal schemes used simultaneously.

Portamento - A continuous gliding movement from one tone to another through all the intervening pitches.

Prelude - An orchestral introduction to an act or a whole opera that precedes the opening scene.

Presto, prestissimo - Vigorous, and with the utmost speed.

Prima donna - Literally, “first lady.” The female star or principal singer in an opera cast or opera company.

Prologue - A piece sung before the curtain goes up on the opera proper: Tonio's Prologue in Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*.

Quaver - An eighth note.

Range - The span of tonal pitch of a particular voice: soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto, tenor, baritone, and bass.

Recitative - A formal device used to advance the plot. It is usually sung in a rhythmically free vocal style that imitates the natural inflections of speech; it conveys the dialogue and narrative in operas and oratorios. *Secco*, or dry, recitative is accompanied by harpsichord and sometimes with other continuo instruments; *accompagnato* indicates that the recitative is accompanied by the orchestra.

Ritornello - A refrain, or short recurrent instrumental passage between elements of a vocal composition.

Romanza - A solo song that is usually sentimental; it is shorter and less complex than an aria and rarely deals with terror, rage, or anger.

Romantic Period - The Romantic period is usually considered to be between the early 19th and early 20th centuries. Romanticists found inspiration in nature and man. Von Weber's *Der Freischütz* and Beethoven's *Fidelio* (1805) are considered the first German Romantic operas; many of Verdi's operas as well as the early operas of Wagner are also considered Romantic operas.

Roulade - A florid, embellished melody sung to one syllable.

Rubato - An expressive technique, literally meaning "robbed"; it is a fluctuation of tempo within a musical phrase, often against a rhythmically steady accompaniment.

Secco - "Dry"; the type of accompaniment for recitative played by the harpsichord and sometimes continuo instruments.

Semitone - A half step, the smallest distance between two notes. In the key of C, the half steps are from E to F and from B to C.

Serial music - Music based on a series of tones in a chosen pattern without regard for traditional tonality.

Sforzando - Sudden loudness and force; it must stand out from the texture and be emphasized by an accent.

Singspiel - Literally, "song drama." Early German style of opera employing spoken dialogue between songs: Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Soprano - The highest range of the female voice ranging from lyric (light and graceful quality) to dramatic (fuller and heavier in tone).

Sotto voce - Literally, “below the voice”; sung softly between a whisper and a quiet conversational tone.

Soubrette - A soprano who sings supporting roles in comic opera: Adele in Strauss’s *Die Fledermaus*; Despina in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*.

Spinto - From the Italian “spingere” (to push); a singer with lyric vocal qualities who “pushes” the voice to achieve heavier dramatic qualities.

Sprechstimme - Literally, “speaking voice.” The singer half sings a note and half speaks; the declamation sounds like speaking but the duration of pitch makes it seem almost like singing.

Staccato - Short, clipped, detached, rapid articulation; the opposite of legato.

Stretto - Literally, “narrow.” A concluding passage performed in a quick tempo to create a musical climax.

Strophe - Strophe is a rhythmic system of repeating lines. A musical setting of a strophic text is characterized by the repetition of the same music for all strophes.

Syncopation - A shifting of the beat forward or back from its usual place in the bar; a temporary displacement of the regular metrical accent in music caused typically by stressing the weak beat.

Supernumerary - A “super”; a performer with a non-singing and non-speaking role: “Spear-carrier.”

Symphonic poem - A large orchestral work in one continuous movement, usually narrative or descriptive in character: Franz Liszt’s *Les Preludes*; Richard Strauss’s *Don Juan*, *Till Eulenspiegel*, and *Ein Heldenleben*.

Tempo - The speed at which music is performed.

Tenor - The highest natural male voice.

Tessitura - The usual range of a voice part.

Tonality - The organization of all the tones and harmonies of a piece of music in relation to a tonic (the first tone of its scale).

Tone poem - An orchestral piece with a program.

Tonic - The principal tone of the key in which a piece is written. C is the tonic of C major.

Trill - Two adjacent notes rapidly and repeatedly alternated.

Tutti - All together.

Twelve-tone - The twelve chromatic tones of the octave placed in a chosen fixed order and constituting, with some permitted permutations and derivations, the melodic and harmonic material of a serial musical piece. Each note of the chromatic scale is used as part of the melody before any other note is repeated.

Verismo - Literally “truth”; the artistic use of contemporary everyday material in preference to the heroic or legendary in opera. A movement particularly in Italian opera during the late 19th and early 20th centuries: Mascagni’s *Cavalleria rusticana*.

Vibrato - A “vibration”; a slightly tremulous effect imparted to vocal or instrumental tone to enrich and intensify sound, and add warmth and expressiveness through slight and rapid variations in pitch.

