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PUCCINI'S

LE VILLI

**TRANSLATED FROM ITALIAN
and including music highlight transcriptions**

Edited by Burton D. Fisher
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Opera Journeys Publishing[™] / Coral Gables, Florida

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Le Villi

(“The Witches” or “The Willis”)

Opera in Italian in two acts

Music
by
Giacomo Puccini

Libretto by Ferdinando Fontana

Premiere:

One-act version: Teatro dal Verme, Milan, May 1884

Two-act version: Teatro Regio, Turin, December 1884

Principal Characters in Le Villi

Guglielmo Wulf	Baritone
Anna, Guglielmo's daughter	Soprano
Roberto	Tenor
A Narrator	Spoken

Mountaineers, Villagers, the Willis (Spirits)

TIME: 1800's

PLACE: A village in Germany's Black Forest

Brief Story Synopsis

It is spring in the Black Forest. Mountaineers and villagers celebrate the betrothal of Roberto to Anna, daughter of Guglielmo. But before the marriage, Roberto must leave for Mainz to collect an inheritance bequeathed him by an aunt who recently died. Before departing, Roberto assures Anna of his love, however, Anna reveals that she has become haunted by premonitions that she would die while awaiting his return.

In Mainz, Roberto betrays Anna by falling prey to a temptress. Anna has been awaiting in vain for his return. By winter, in her despair, Anna dies of grief. Anna's spirit is transformed into one of the Willis, the spirits of young women who have died of lovesickness after they were abandoned.

It is the following winter. Roberto has been deserted by his femme fatale. Broken in spirit and fortune, he returns to his village in the Black Forest, eagerly expecting that Anna has been waiting for his return.

Anna and other Willis appear before Roberto as apparitions. Anna appears; Roberto thinks that she is alive. When he tries to kiss her, Anna denounces him for his desertion and faithlessness.

The Willis drag Roberto into their frenzied dance. Roberto becomes exhausted and falls dead.

Act I

*It is spring. The trees are in bloom and there are flowers everywhere.
A path over rocky ground disappears into the forest. A small bridge spans the hollow.*

*There is a celebration before Guglielmo's humble house: the villagers dance,
and there is a table set with food and beverages.*

Guglielmo, Anna and Roberto are seated at the head of the table.

Montanari:

Evviva i fidanzati!

Mountaineers:

Long life to the betrothed!

Roberto and Anna come forward, arm in arm.

Dalla vecchia di Magonza
Roberto ereditier!
I tesori accumulati son molti davvero!

The old woman of Mainz died and made
Roberto her heir!
The accumulated treasures are truly
numerous!

Dunque povero stasera Roberto partirà
ei ricco tornerà a sposar la fidanzata.
Evviva i fidanzati!

Tonight, Roberto will leave a poor man,
and return a rich man to marry his betrothed.
Long life to the betrothed!

Gira! Gira! Gira!
Balza! Gira! Gira! Balza!

Turn! Turn! Turn!
Jump! Turn! Turn! Jump!

La musica fremente e delira,
la danza sospinge ed incalza.
Gira! Balza! Balza! Gira!

The music throbs and is maddening,
the dance driving and pressing on.
Turn! Jump! Jump! Turn!

Oh, volano rapide l'ore se il piede alla
danza è leggiadro!
Il ballo è il rival dell'amore.
Il cuore fa batter davvero!

Oh, the hours fly by when the dancing steps
are nimble!
Dancing is the rival of love.
It truly makes the heart beat!

Alcuni Montanari:

Ohè! Babbo Guglielmo!
Venite voi pure a danzar!

Some Mountaineers: (to Guglielmo)

Hey there! Father Guglielmo!
Come and join the dance!

Guglielmo:

Ebben, perchè no? Poffar mio!
Son vecchio, ma in gambe so star!

Guglielmo:

All right, why not? By Jove!
I'm old, but I can still move my legs!

*Guglielmo invites a young girl to dance. Friends respond with laughter and applause.
Afterwards, Guglielmo exits with the dancer, and all follow him.*

Anna carries a bunch of forget-me-not flowers.

Andante Lento
ANNA

Se co - me vo - i pic - ci - na io fossi, o va - ghi fior,
If I were small like you, pretty flowers,

Anna:

Se come voi piccina io fossi, o vaghi fior,
sempre sempre vicina potrei stare al mio amor.
Allor dirgli vorrei:
“Io penso sempre a te!”
Ripeter gli potrei:
“Non ti scordar di me!”

Voi, di me più felici, io seguirete, o fior;
per valli e per pendici seguirete il mio amor.
Ah, se il nome che avete menzognero non
è, deh, al mio amor ripetete:
“Non ti scordar di me!”

Anna:

If I were small like you, pretty flowers,
I could always, always be near my beloved.
Then I would tell him:
“I think of you always!”
I’d repeat it to him:
“Do not forget me!”

You flowers, who are more fortunate than I,
will follow my beloved over hills and dales.
Ah, if your name forget-me-not is not a
deception, then repeat this to my love:
“Do not forget me!”

*Anna places the bunch of flowers in Roberto's suitcase.
Roberto observes Anna, and smiles as he approaches her.*

Roberto:

Ah! Ah! T’ho colta!

Roberto:

Ah! I’ve caught you!

Anna:

Tu!

Anna:

You!

Roberto takes the flowers from the suitcase, kisses them, and then puts them back.

Roberto:

Grazie, Anna mia.
Ma un più gentil ricordo io chiederti vorrei.

Roberto:

Thanks, dear Anna.
But I would like to ask you for a more tender
token of remembrance.

Anna:

Quale?

Anna:

What?

Roberto:

Un sorriso.
Non esser, Anna mia, mesta sì tanto;
passeran pochi giorni e tornerò.

Roberto:

A smile.
Don’t be so sad, my dear Anna;
I’ll return in a few days.

Anna:

Io tento invan di trattenere il pianto,
ho una tristezza che vincer non so.

Foschi presagi mi turban la mente.

Mi par ch'io non ti debba più veder!

Roberto:

Anna!

Anna:

Stanotte sognai che morente t'attendevo.

Roberto:

Suvvia! Quali pensier!
Pensa invece ai dì lieti che il destino ci
promette, benigno al nostro amor!

Anna:

Ma m'ami tu davvero?

Roberto:

Mio cherubino, perchè dell'amor mio dubiti
ancor?
Tu dell'infanzia mia le gioie dividesti e le
carezze;
da te soave e pia imparai della vita le dolcezze;
ero povero, e tu l'affetto mio più d'ogni
ricco volesti pregiar.

Ah! Dubita di Dio, ma no, dell'amor mio
non dubitar! Io t'amo! Io t'amo!

Anna:

Dolci e soavi accenti, deh, vi scolpite nel
mio mesto cuor,
e nei foschi momenti dell'attesa alleviate il
mio dolore!

Dolci e soavi accenti, oh, quante volte il
labbro mio vi dee mormorar:
"Ah, dubita di Dio, ma no, dell'amor mio
non dubitar! Io t'amo! Io t'amo!"

Anna:

I try in vain not to cry,
I don't know how to overcome this sadness I
feel.

My mind is preoccupied with dark
premonitions.

I feel that I shall never see you again!

Roberto:

Anna!

Anna:

Last night I dreamed that I was dying while I
was awaiting your return.

Roberto:

Come now! What terrible thoughts!
Think instead of the happy days that a
gracious destiny promises our love!

Anna:

But do you truly love me?

Roberto:

My angel, why do you still doubt my love?
From the days of my childhood we shared
joys and kisses;
I learned about the sweetness of life from
you, so gentle and virtuous;
I was poor, but you cherished my affection
more than that of a rich man.

Ah! Doubt God, but do not doubt my love!
I love you!

Anna:

Sweet and gentle words, engrave yourself in
my sad heart,
and soothe my grief in the dark moments of
my waiting vigil!

Sweet and gentle words, oh, my lips will
murmur them so many times:
"Ah! Doubt God, but do not doubt my love!
I love you! I love you!"

The mountaineers and Guglielmo return.

Montanari:

Presto! Presto in viaggio!
È l'ora di partir!
Pria che il giocondo raggio del sole abbia a
svanir si parta!

Roberto:

Anna, coraggio!

Anna:

Io mi sento morir!

Montanari:

Della fosca al limite noi verrem con te.

Roberto:

Padre mio, benediteci!

Guglielmo:

Tutti qui intorno a me!

Mountaineers: (to Roberto)

Quickly! Get on your way!
It's time to leave!
Be on your way before the last joyful rays of
sunshine have disappeared!

Roberto: (to Anna)

Anna, courage!

Anna:

I feel like dying!

Mountaineers: (to Roberto)

We'll accompany you to the edge of the forest.

Roberto: (to Guglielmo)

My father, bless us!

Guglielmo:

All come around me!

Anna and Roberto kneel before Guglielmo.

Lento**GUGLIELMO**

Angiol di Dio, che i vanni ri - volgi al ciel sta-se - ra,
Angel of God, may the wings you spread to heaven tonight,

Angiol di Dio, che i vanni rivolgi al ciel
stasera, reca questa preghiera al trono
del Signor!

Angel of God, may the wings you spread to
heaven tonight, bear this prayer to the throne
of the Lord!

Anna, Roberto, Guglielmo:

Sia propizio il cammino ad ogni pellegrino,
non serbi disinganni ogni sogno d'amor.

Anna, Roberto, Guglielmo:

May the trip be favorable for every pilgrim;
let every dream of love not become a disillusion.

After the prayer, Guglielmo embraces Roberto.

Roberto embraces Anna, and then shakes hands with the mountaineers.

Roberto:

Padre, Anna, addio!

Roberto:

Father, Anna, farewell!

Guglielmo, Anna, Montanari:

Addio, Roberto, addio!

Guglielmo, Anna, Mountaineers:

Farewell, Roberto, farewell!

Roberto departs.

Intermezzo

Part I: The Abandonment

Il Narratore:

Di quei giorni a Magonza una sirena
i vecchi e i giovinetti affascinava.
Ella trasse Roberto all'orgia oscena
e l'affetto per Anna ei vi obliava.
Intanto, afflitta da ineffabil pena,
la fanciulla tradita lo aspettava.
Ma invan l'attese. Ed al cader del verno
ella chiudeva gli occhi al sonno eterno.

The Narrator:

In those days, in Mainz, a temptress
bewitched men, young and old.
She lured Roberto to the orgy and he forgot
about his affection for Anna.
Meanwhile, afflicted with indescribable
anguish, the betrayed girl waited for him.
But she waited in vain. And at the end of
winter she closed her eyes and died.

Anna's funeral cortege is seen in the distance.

Coro di Donne:

Come un giglio reciso
dentro la bara giace.
Raggio di luna
è il pallor del suo viso.
O pura virgo, requiesce in pace!

Chorus of Women:

She lies inside the coffin
like a slashed lily.
Her face is as pale
as a ray of moonlight.
Oh pure virgin, rest in peace!

Part II: The Witches' Sabbath

Il Narratore:

V'è nella selva Nera una leggenda
che delle Villi la leggenda è detta
e ai spergiuri d'amor suona tremenda.

The Narrator:

There is a legend in the Black Forest about
the Willis; when the legend is told it terrifies
faithless lovers.

Se muor d'amore qualche giovinetta
nella selva ogni notte la tregenda
viene a danzare, e il traditor vi aspetta.

If a young girl dies of love, she comes to
dance in the forest every night of the
witches' sabbath to await the betrayer.

Poi, se l'incontra, con lui danza e ride
e colla foga del danzar, l'uccide.
Or per Roberto venne un triste giorno.
dalla sirena in cenci abbandonato
egli alla selva pensò far ritorno,
e questa notte appunto ei v'è tornato.

Then, if he is found, they dance and laugh,
killing him with the energy of the dancing.
Now a sad day arrived for Roberto: after
the siren abandoned him and left him raging,
he thought about returning to the forest, and
he returned that night.

Già nel bosco s'avanza: intorno, intorno
riddan le Villi nell'aer gelato.
Ei, tremando di freddo e di paura,
è già nel mezzo della selva oscura.

He entered the woods and the Willis whirled
around him in the frigid air.
He was in the middle of the dark forest,
trembling from cold and from fear.

Act II

*It is a cold winter night in the Black Forest.
The bare trees are heavily laden with snow.
The sky is calm and starlit, the moon illuminating the forest.
The Willis come to dance, preceded by will-o-the wisps,
imp-like demons who appear in droves.*

Guglielmo:

No, possibil non è che invendicata
resti la colpa sua!
Vivea beata e tranquilla al mio fianco
la mia dolce figliola, ed egli venne e colla
sua parola d'amor le smanie in lei destò.

Chi dunque o scellerato, chi l'amor tuo ti
chiese?
Quali orribili offese t'abbiam mai fatto noi
per uccider quell'angelo,
e agli estremi miei giorni serbar cotanta
angoscia?
No, possibil non è che invendicata
resti colpa sì grande!

Guglielmo:

No, it isn't possible that his guilt should
remain unavenged!
My sweet daughter was living happily and
peacefully by my side, and he came along
and awakened a crazed yearning with his
words of love.

Who then, oh villain, asked you for your
love?
What horrible offenses have we ever
inflicted on you that you have caused the
death of that angel, and brought so much
anguish to my remaining days?
No, it isn't conceivable that a guilt so grave
should remain unavenged!

**Andante Lento
GUGLIELMO**

A - ni - ma san - ta della figlia mi - a se la leg-
Holy spirit of my daughter

gen - da del - le Vil - li è ve - ra,
if the legend of the Willis is true,

Anima santa della figlia mia,
se la leggenda delle Villi è vera,
deh non esser con lui, qual fosti, pia,
ma qui l'attendi al cader della sera.
S'io sapessi saperti vendicata
lieto saluterei l'ultimo dì.
Ah, perdona Signor, l'idea spietata
che dal mio cor che sanguina fuggì.

Holy spirit of my daughter,
if the legend of the Willis is true,
then do not be merciful with him,
but await him as evening falls.
If I could but know that you were avenged,
I would happily salute my last day.
Ah, forgive me Lord for the inhumane
thoughts emerging from my bleeding heart.

Guglielmo enters the house.

Le Villi:

Ei giunge! Anna! Anna! Anna!
 Di morte alla condanna, alla vendetta che
 qui l'aspetta.
 Ei viene il traditor!
 Eccolo s'avvicina.
 Su dannato, cammina!

The Willis: (*from the distance*)

He is coming! Anna! Anna! Anna!
 We await vengeance; he is condemned to
 death.
 The traitor who condemned you is coming!
 Here, he is approaching.
 Come damned one, walk!

Roberto appears on the bridge.

Roberto:

Ecco la casa.
 Dio, che orrenda notte!
 Strane voci m'inseguono.
 Le Villi, evvia!
 Son fole!

Roberto: (*to himself*)

Here's the house.
 God, what a horrendous night!
 Strange voices follow me.
 Willis, get away from here!
 They must be illusions!

No, delle Villi me non perseguita la
 vendetta fatal!
 Tu sol m'insegui, rimorso vipera
 infernal!
 Vipera dal veleno infernal!

No, I am not being pursued by the fatal
 vengeance of the Willis!
 I am pursued by my remorse; it is like an
 infernal viper!
 A viper of infernal poison!

Andante Mesto
ROBERTO

Torna al fe - li - ci di do - len - te il mio pen-sier.
My anguished thoughts return to those happy days.

Ridean del maggio i fior, floria l'amor, floria per me l'amore!
The flowers of May laughed; love bloomed, and love bloomed for me!

Torna ai felici di dolente il mio pensier.
 Ridean del maggio i fior, floria l'amor,
 floria per me l'amor!
 Or tutto si copri di lugubre mister.
 Ed io non ho nel cuor che tristezza e terror!

My anguished thoughts return to those
 happy days.
 The flowers of May laughed; love bloomed,
 and love bloomed for me!
 Now all is covered with doleful mystery.
 And I don't feel anything in my heart but
 sadness and terror!

Roberto advances toward Anna's house.

Forse ella vive!

Perhaps she lives!

Bussiam!

Let's knock!

Roberto retreats. He is unable to knock on the door, as if restrained by a mysterious force.

Qual brivido mi colse!
Invan di quella soglia tentai sul limite levar
la man!

What a shudder overcomes me!
I tried in vain to raise my hand to her
threshold!

Coro di Villi:
Su. Dannato, cammina!

The Willis:
Up, damned one, walk!

Roberto:
Pur d'intendere parmi davvero un canto
funebre!

Roberto:
Yet it seems to me that I indeed hear a
doleful chant!

Roberto kneels and prays.

Andante Religioso
ROBERTO



O sommo Iddio! del mio cam - mino, o sommo Iddio, del mio destin quest'è la
Oh mighty Lord this is the end of my life and the fulfillment of my destiny.

me - ta. Fa che il perdono, fa che il perdono la renda lieta, un solo i - stan - te.
I would give my life for one moment of her forgiveness, and then I would die happy!

O sommo Iddio del mio cammino,
del mio destin questa è la meta.
Fa che il perdono la renda lieta,
un solo istante e poi morirò!

Oh mighty Lord this is the end of my life
and the fulfillment of my destiny.
I would give my life for one moment of her
forgiveness, and then I would die happy!

Coro di Villi:
Su! Cammina! Cammina!

The Willis:
Up, damned one, walk!

Roberto leaps to his feet.

Roberto:
Pregar non posso!
Ah, maledetto il dì che andai lontan di qui!
Maledetta sia la tua bellezza o cortigiana vil!
Maledetta in etern, maledetta!

Roberto:
I cannot pray!
Ah, cursed be the day that I went far away
from here! Cursed be your beauty, oh vile
courtesan! Cursed in eternity, cursed!

Le Villi:
Cammina, cammina!

The Willis:
Come on, walk!

Anna:
Roberto!

Anna: *(Calling from the distance)*
Roberto!

Roberto:

Ciel, la sua voce, dunque morta non è!

Roberto:

Heavens, her voice, then she isn't dead!

*Anna appears on the bridge.***Anna:**Non son più l'amor.
Son la vendetta!**Anna:**I am no longer love.
I am revenge!**Roberto:**

Gran Dio! Gran Dio!

Roberto: *(falling to the ground)*

Great God!

Anna:

Ricordi quel che dicevi nel mese dei fiori?

Anna:Do you remember what you said during that
Springtime?**Andante Lento****ANNA**

Tu del - l'infan-zia mi - a le gio - ie di-vi-desti e le ca - rez - ze;
From the time of my childhood we shared joys and kisses;
da te so - a - ve e pi - a, da te so - a - ve e pi - a im - pa -
I learned about the sweetness of life from you,
ra - i del - la vi - ta le dol-cez - ze!
so gentle and virtuous!

“Tu dell’infanzia mia le gioie dividesti e le
carezze da te soave e pia imparai della vita
le dolcezze!

Ah, dubita di Dio ma no, dell’amor mio,
non dubitar.”
T’amai: mi tradisti. T’attesi: e non venisti.
Ma è tremendo dolore in silenzio soffrir!
Senza speranza in cuore mi facesti morir!

Roberto:La scordai, l’ho tradita e per me perde la
vita.

“From the days of my childhood we shared
joys and kisses, and I learned about the
sweetness of life from you, so gentle and
virtuous!

Ah! Doubt God, but do not doubt my love!”
I loved you: you betrayed me.
I waited for you: and you didn’t come.
But it is so painful to suffer in silence!
I no longer had hope in my heart; you made
me die!

Roberto:I forgot her. I betrayed her, and she died
because of me.

Ah, è tremendo il dolore che mi tocca
soffrir.
Col rimorso nel cuore io mi sento morir!

Ah, the pain that I must suffer is horrible.
With remorse in my heart, I feel that I am
dying!

*Roberto advances toward Anna, as if impelled by an unknown force.
Anna opens her arms, drawing him nearer to her.
The Willis gather around him and dance in a frenzy.*

Spiriti e Villi:

Qui noi t'aspettiamo traditor!
Da noi non attender pietà!
Chi in vita fu sordo all'amor,
in morte perdono non ha!
Traditor, t'aspettiam!
Gira! Balza! Gira!

Spirits of Willis:

We await you here, betrayer!
Do not expect pity from us!
He who in life was deaf to love,
does not deserve forgiveness in death!
Betrayer, we await you!
Turn! Jump! Turn!

*Terrified, Roberto goes to knock on Guglielmo's door.
The Willis pursue him. He tries to escape, but his way is barred by Anna,
who drags him into the frenzied dance of the Willis.
Roberto becomes exhausted and falls at Anna's feet.*

Roberto:

Anna, pietà!

Roberto:

Anna, mercy!

Anna:

Sei mio!

Anna: *(as she departs)*

You are mine!

Le Villi:

Osanna!

The Willis: *(following Anna)*

Hosannah!

END OF OPERA