

April 30, 2020 – Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*

Mozart's first major operatic success will be featured on this week's WCPE Opera House: *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (*The Abduction from the Seraglio*). Hosted by the late **Al Ruocchio** (1937-2007), we'll hear a 1984 recording of this comic *Singspiel* in which the singers do their own spoken dialogue. With a libretto by Christoph Friedrich Bretzner and Gottlieb Stephanie, the opera was premiered on July 16, 1782 at Vienna's Burgtheater. The music includes some of the composer's most spectacular and difficult arias: Osmin's "O, wie will ich triumphieren" twice goes down to a low D, one of the lowest notes demanded of any voice in opera. Perhaps the most famous aria is the long and elaborate "Martern aller Arten" sung by Konstanze.

The opera takes place in sixteenth-century Turkey. The Spanish nobleman Belmonte (tenor **Gösta Winbergh**) comes to the palace of Pasha Selim (actor **Will Quadflieg**), where his fiancée, Konstanze (soprano **Edita Gruberova**), her English maid Blondchen (soprano **Kathleen Battle**), and his valet Pedrillo (tenor **Heinz Zednik**), in love with Blondchen, have been enslaved since their capture by pirates. Konstanze has refused the advances of the Pasha, as has Blondchen of the harem-keeper Osmin (bass **Martti Talvela**). Engaged by the Pasha as an architect, Belmonte and Pedrillo plan an escape but are caught by Osmin. The Pasha learns that Belmonte is the son of his greatest enemy, but as an act of magnanimity allows all his prisoners to go free.

Sir **George Solti** conducts the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and the Chorus of the Vienna State Opera.

In this video enjoy Finnish bass **Martti Talvela's** 1980 Bavarian State Opera performance of Osmin's "O, wie will ich triumphieren": <http://youtu.be/IM531FqMvqE>.

As a bonus, we'll celebrate the artistry of American baritone **Thomas Hampson**, who'll sing arias and duets by Mozart, Verdi and Rossini.

Be sure to join us this Saturday, May 2nd, at 1:00 p.m. for a rebroadcast of the December 25, 2004 performance of Leoš Janáček's *Káťa Kabanová*. The soaring soprano **Karita Mattila** sings the title role, a young woman forced by fate to choose between true love and family honor, with mezzo-soprano **Magdalena Kozená** as her unyielding mother-in-law Varvaa. Tenor **Chris Merritt** is Tichon, the young object of Káťa's love, and bass **Jorma Silvasti** is his rich but cruel uncle Boris. **Jirí Belohlávek** conducts one of the defining operatic scores of the 20th century.

Next Thursday, May 7, at 7:00 p.m. I'll present Umberto Giordano's *Andrea Chénier*, which is loosely based on the life of the French poet André Chénier, who was executed in 1794 during the French Revolution. Tenor **Mario del Monaco** sings the title role, soprano **Renata Tebaldi** is Maddalena di Coigny, and baritone **Ettore Bastianini** is Carlo Gérard. **Gianandrea Gavazzeni** conducts this 1957 Decca/London recording.

The WCPE Opera House is heard every Thursday evening at 7 o'clock in the Eastern time zone on 89.7 FM in central North Carolina. We're streamed online world-wide at <http://www.theclassicalstation.org>, and you can listen on WCPE's Android or iPhone apps.

Bob Chapman

W. Robert Chapman, Host of the WCPE Opera House