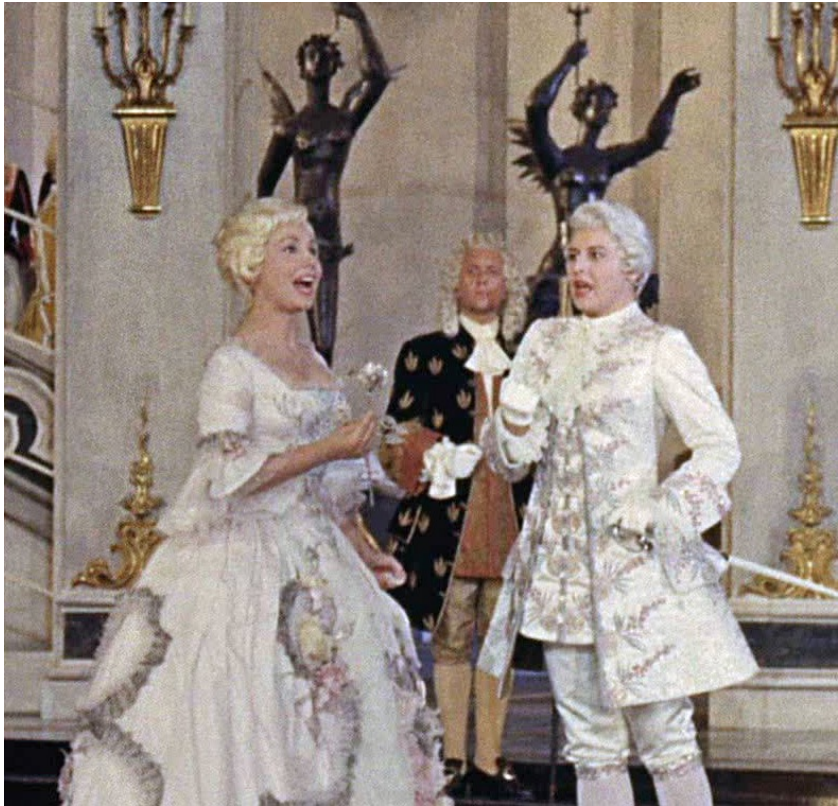


Operatic Duets

It Takes Two . . .



Art Axelrod

 OPERA
GUILD
OF ROCHESTER

The Opera Guild of Rochester

Guild Address:

Opera Guild of Rochester
PO Box 25613
Rochester, NY 14625-0613

Opera Guild of Rochester on the Web:
www.operaguil dofrochester.org

Guild Contacts:

Carol Crocca, President – (585) 385-6971
operaguil dlady@gmail.com

Duets – Voice Combinations

- ◆ There are five different basic voices:
 - Soprano
 - Mezzo
 - Tenor
 - Baritone
 - Bass
- ◆ So there are **15** potential combinations for a duet.
 - Each combination has a characteristic “Tone Color”
- ◆ We won’t cover all 15, but we will note the vocal combinations for each example as we go.

Duets: Dramatic Setting

- ◆ Friendship, Comradeship, Love
- ◆ Agreement
- ◆ Conflict
- ◆ Negotiation
- ◆ Often a combination . . .

Duets: Musical Structure

- ◆ Harmony
- ◆ Counterpoint
- ◆ Dialog
- ◆ Unison
- ◆ Often, combinations
 - E.g. Love duet: He sings, she sings, they sing together.

Some Common Combinations

◆ Soprano – Tenor

- Usually Hero is a Tenor, Heroine a Soprano

◆ Soprano – Mezzo

- Heroine and Maid / Nurse / Acolyte / Older Relative
- Sometimes Hero is a “Trouser Role” sung by Mezzo

◆ Tenor – Baritone

- Friendship Duet

◆ Tenor – Mezzo

- Young man and older woman
- Sometimes the Heroine is a Mezzo

◆ Soprano – Baritone

- Young woman and older man
- Sometimes the Hero is a Baritone

◆ Etc . . .

- And all the rest . . .

What to Listen for:

- ◆ What is the dramatic transaction being carried out by the duet?
 - Love, antagonism, friendship, ...
- ◆ How does the musical structure support the transaction?
 - E.g. harmony, counterpoint, unison, ...
- ◆ How does the vocal combination support the musical portrayal of the transaction?
 - Soprano–tenor, baritone–bass, etc...

Our Selections

1. Soprano – Mezzo (“Trouser Role”): Love at First Sight
Presentation of the Rose from *Rosenkavalier*
2. Soprano-Tenor: Bel Canto Love Duet
“Verranno a te sull’aure” from *Lucia di Lamermoor*
3. Soprano-Tenor: “Love-Death” Duet
“O terra addio” from *Aida*
4. Soprano-Tenor: Doomed Love
“Di Parigi mia cara” from *La Traviata*
5. Soprano-Tenor: Discovery of Love
Fontainebleu Love Duet from *Don Carlo*
6. Soprano-Mezzo: Friendship and conflict
“Mira, o Norma!” from *Norma*
7. Tenor-Bass: Unison
The Temple Guardians from *Die Zauberflöte*

Selections (continued)

8. Soprano-Tenor: Love Duet – Falling into Unison
“Senti ... L’ora e vicina” from *Tosca*
9. Bass-Bass: A Patter Duet
“Aspetta, aspetta, cara sposina” from *Don Pasquale*
10. Tenor-Baritone: Comradeship
“Dio, che nell’alma infondere” from *Don Carlo*
11. Soprano–Mezzo: Mistress and Maid
“Vienes, Mallika” (The Flower Duet) from *Lakmé*
12. Two Basses: Dialog
“Il Grand’Inquisitor!” from *Don Carlo*
13. Soprano-Bass: Conflict
“O Engländer! ...” from *The Abduction from the Seraglio*
14. Baritone-Soprano: Rejected Love
Final Scene from *Eugene Onegin*
15. Soprano-Mezzo: Rosenkavalier – Happy Ending
Final Love Duet, Act 3 from *Der Rosenkavalier*

Soprano-Mezzo: Trouser Role
Love at First Sight

Presentation of the Rose
from Richard Strauss's
Der Rosenkavalier

Sena Jurinac (ms), Octavian; Anneliese
Rothenberger (s), Sophie
1962 (Remastered Film)

Vienna Philharmonic, Herbert von
Karajan, cond.

Der Rosenkavalier

Richard Strauss (1864 –1949)

Libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal

First Performance 1911, Dresden

Seventeen year old Octavian is the lover of the 30-something Marschallin. Sophie, the daughter of newly-knighted Herr Faninal is betrothed to the boorish Baron Ochs.

To formalize the betrothal, Ochs sends Octavian to present a silver rose to Sophie. The two fall in love, and after considerable turmoil, Ochs is gotten rid of and the two youngsters are united. The Marschallin blesses the union and reconciles herself to her new status as a mature woman.

Presentation of the Rose

Richard Strauss's *der Rosenkavalier*

Herr Faninal's sumptuous mansion: his daughter Sophie has been betrothed to the very aristocratic (but broke) Baron Ochs of Lerchenau. (Sophie has never met Ochs and does not yet know that he is boorish, obnoxious, arrogant and thoroughly despicable.)

In accordance with ancient family custom, Ochs has selected Octavian to present a silver rose to seal the betrothal. Thus, Octavian is the "Rose Knight" (der Rosenkavalier).

But the two young people fall in love.

Soprano-Tenor: Bel Canto Love Duet

“Verranno a te sull’aure” from Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lamermoor*

Piotr Beczała (t), Edgardo; Anna Netrebko (s),
Lucia

2009

Metropolitan Opera, Marco Armiliato, cond.

Lucia di Lammermoor

Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848))

Libretto by Salvatore Cammarano loosely based on Sir Walter Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819)

First Performance 1835, Naples

The Ashtons and the Ravenwoods have been feuding for generations. Emotionally fragile Lucy Ashton (Lucia) has fallen in love with Sir Edgar Ravenwood (Edgardo) but is being manipulated by her brother Henry (Enrico). The consequences are predictably tragic.

Soprano-Tenor Love Duet

Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*

The Ashtons and Ravenwoods have been feuding for years. But Lucia Ashton and Edgardo Ravenwood are in love and have been meeting secretly.

Here, Edgardo explains to Lucia that he must leave for a time, on a mission to France on royal business. They sing a love duet.

The duet is in a classic form: She sings, then he sings and then they sing together.

Soprano-Tenor: Love-Death

“O terra addio” from Verdi’s *Aida*

Placido Domingo (t), Radamès; Aprile Millo (s),
Aida; (Dolora Zajick (ms), Amneris)

1991

Orchestra and Chorus of the Metropolitan
Opera, James Levine, cond.

Aida

Verdi

Libretto by Antonio Ghislanzoni after a unpublished scenario, *La Fiancée du Nil*, by Auguste Mariette and Camille du Locle.

First Performance, 1871, Cairo

Egypt is at war with Ethiopia. Aida, Ethiopian princess, has been captured as a slave in Egypt, but falls in love with Radamès, Egyptian general.

“O terra addio”

Verdi's *Aida*

Radamès has been tricked into revealing Egyptian military secrets to Amonasro, King of Ethiopia. For this he is condemned to die by being buried alive in a tomb.

Aida has guessed what Radamès' fate will be and has secreted herself in that tomb, so that they could die together.

Above the tomb, Amneris grieves for Radamès as the priests chant. Inside, Radamès and Aida sing their ecstatic love-death duet.

Soprano-Tenor: Doomed Love

**“Di Parigi mia cara”
from Verdi’s
*La Traviata***

Renée Fleming (s), Violetta; Rolando
Villazón (t), Alfredo
2006

Los Angeles Opera, James Conlon, cond.

La Traviata

Giuseppe Verdi (1813 -1901)

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave after *La dame aux camélias* by Alexandre Dumas *fils* (1852)

First Performance 1853, Venice

The doomed love between Parisian courtesan Violetta Valérie and the wealthy young bourgeois, Alfredo Germont. Violetta is dying of consumption.

Soprano-Tenor: Doomed Love

Verdi's La Traviata

The final scene – Violetta's bedroom:

Alfredo and Violetta are deeply in love but they have been tragically separated. Violetta is dying of consumption.

Just in time, Alfredo returns and tries to restore Violetta. They sing a poignant duet about how they will leave Paris and start a new life.

(This being opera, she dies, dramatically, soon after this duet.)

Soprano-Tenor: Discovery of Love

Fontainebleu Love Duet **from Verdi's** ***Don Carlo***

Jonas Kaufmann (t), Don Carlo; Anja Harteros
(s), Elisabetta

2013

Orchestra of the Wiener Staatsoper, Antonio
Pappano, cond.

Don Carlo

Giuseppe Verdi (1813 -1901)

French Libretto by Joseph Méry and Camille du Locle
after *Don Carlos, Infant von Spanien* (*Don Carlos, Infante of Spain*) by Friedrich Schiller (1787)

Italian Translation by Achille de Lauzières.

First Performance, French, 1867, Paris
Italian, 1867, London

Personal and moral conflicts between Prince Carlo and
his father, King Philip II of Spain, 16th century.

Fontainebleau Love Duet

Verdi's *Don Carlo*

France and Spain have been at war but are now in the process of reconciling. As part of the settlement, Carlo, Spanish Prince is betrothed to Elizabeth, French Princess. They have never met.

Fontainebleau Forest, France: Carlo and Elizabeth meet in Fontainebleau Forest. Carlo reveals himself to Elizabeth. A rapturous love duet follows.

(Their joy is shortlived – they soon will learn that as part of the truce negotiations, Elizabeth is to marry Philip, instead of Carlo).

Soprano-Mezzo:
Friendship and Conflict
“Mira, o Norma!”
from Bellini’s
Norma

Sondra Radvonovsky (s), Norma; Joyce
DiDonato (ms), Adalgisa
2017

Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Carlo Rizzi, cond.
Production by David McVicar

Norma

Vincenzo Bellini (1801 – 1835)

Libretto by Felice Romano after Alexandre Soumet's *play Norma, ou L'infanticide* (1831)

First Performance 1831, La Scala, Milan

During the Roman occupation of Gaul: Norma is the High Priestess of the Druids, but is in love with Polonius, the Roman commander and has borne him two children. Her acolyte, Adalgisa, has also fallen in love with Polonius but resolves to give him up.

“Mira, o Norma!”

Bellini's *Norma*

Norma discovers that her lover, Polonius, has been unfaithful. She has decided to kill herself.

Adelgisa arrives and tries to console Norma. Norma relents and they finally are reconciled. (Norma is sung by a dramatic soprano, Adelgisa by a mezzo.)

Tenor-Bass: Unison

The Temple Guardians from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*

Alan Oke (t), Graeme Broadbent (b), Armed
Men; Will Hartman (t), Tamino

2003

Orchestra of the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Colin
Davis, cond.

Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute)

WA Mozart (1756-1791)

Libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder

First Performance 1791, Vienna

Prince Tamino enters the community of the wise and just Sarastro and wins the hand of Princess Pamina, daughter of the evil Queen of the Night.

The Temple Guardians

Mozart's *The Magic Flute*

Our hero, Prince Tamino, is about to undergo the ordeal that will initiate him into Sarastro's virtuous order.

He stands at the portal and is greeted by the Temple Guardians.

(These are a bass and tenor singing in unison.)

Soprano-Tenor: Love Duet Falling into Unison

“Senti ... L’ora e vicina” from Puccini’s *Tosca*

Fiorenza Cedolins (s), Tosca; Marcelo Álvarez
(t), Mario
2006

Orchestra dell’Arena di Verona, Daniel Oren, cond.

Tosca

Giocomo Puccini (1858-1924)

Libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa
after Victorien Sardou's play *La Tosca* (1887)

First Performance 1900, Rome

The two lovers, artist Mario Cavaradossi and
singer Tosca, battle the evil police chief,
Baron Scarpia.

“Senti ... L’ora e vicina”

Puccini’s *Tosca*

Mario Cavaradossi is condemned to death by firing squad, but Tosca has (she believes) obtained pardon, whereby the execution will be faked.

She and Mario are together just before the execution and believe they will escape. They sing a rapturous love duet, and at its climax, fall into unison.

(Ironically and tragically, the pardon is faked; Mario is actually shot and Tosca leaps off the roof.)

Bass-Bass: A Patter Duet

“Aspetta, aspetta, cara sposina” from Donizetti’s *Don Pasquale*

Ruggero Raimondi (b), Don Pasquale; Oliver
Widmer (br), Dr. Malatesta; (Juan Diego
Flórez (t), Ernesto)
2006

Orchestra of Opernhaus Zürich, Nello Santi, cond.

Don Pasquale

Gaetano Donizetti (1797 – 1848)

Libretto by Giovanni Ruffini and the composer after a libretto by Angelo Anelli for Stefano Pavesi's opera *Ser Marcantonio* (1810)

First Performance 1843, Paris

A *Commedia dell'arte* farce. The elderly, wealthy bachelor Don Pasquale won't allow his nephew Ernesto to marry his beloved, but intends himself to marry. It goes badly for the Don but with the help of Ernesto's friend Doctor Malatesta, all ends happily.

The Patter Song

- ◆ The patter song is characterised by a fast tempo with a rapid succession of rhythmic patterns in which each syllable of text corresponds to one note.
- ◆ It is a staple of comic opera and operetta, especially Gilbert and Sullivan, but it has also been used in musicals and occasionally in opera.
- ◆ The lyric of a patter song generally features tongue-twisting rhyming text, with alliterative words and other consonant or vowel sounds that are intended to be entertaining to listen to at rapid speed.

Bass-Bass Patter Duet

Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*

Don Pasquale's nephew Ernesto wants to marry Norina, but the Don won't allow it. Instead, the foolish old man himself wants to marry.

The Don's physician, Dr. Malatesta and Ernesto devise a plot: The doctor contrives to have the Don enter into a mock marriage with Norina, who promptly begins to make the Don's life a hell. Now he wants to get rid of her.

The doctor in collusion with Ernesto devise a scheme whereby the Don thinks he will catch Norina in an adulterous situation and will thus be able to divorce her. Actually it's a setup whereby the Don will end up being humiliated.

Don Pasquale and Doctor Malatesta sing a patter duet in which the Don thinks he will catch Norina, but the doctor knows that it will be the Don who is caught.

Tenor-Baritone: Comradeship

**“Dio, che nell’alma infondere”
from Verdi’s
*Don Carlo***

Plácido Domingo (t), Don Carlo; Louis Quilico
(br), Rodrigo
1983

Orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera,
James Levine, cond

Don Carlo

Giuseppe Verdi (1813 -1901)

French Libretto by Joseph Méry and Camille du Locle
after *Don Carlos, Infant von Spanien* (*Don Carlos, Infante of Spain*) by Friedrich Schiller (1787)

Italian Translation by Achille de Lauzières.

First Performance, French, 1867, Paris
Italian, 1867, London

Personal and moral conflicts between Prince Carlo and
his father, King Philip II of Spain, 16th century.

“Dio, che nell'alma infondere” Verdi's *Don Carlo*

Carlo is in love with Elisabetta, Princess of France. She was supposed to marry him but for political reasons was married to his father instead.

Carlo is devastated.

His friend Rodrigo and he are also dedicated to obtaining freedom for the Low Countries, at that time ruled by Spain.

Rodrigo tries to cheer Carlo up by remind him of their struggle to free the low countries. The two comrades sing a rousing duet, dedicating themselves to their task.

(This is Schiller's idealized and romanticized notion. The real historic Carlo was actually a despicable person.)

Soprano–Mezzo: Mistress and Maid

“Vienes, Mallika” (The Flower Duet) from Delibes’ *Lakmé*

Emma Mathews (s), Lakmé;
Dominica Matthews (ms), Mallika;
2011

Australian Opera Orchestra, Gabriele Ferro, cond.

Lakmé

Leo Delibes (1756-1791)

Libretto by Edmond Gondinet and Philippe Gille, based on Théodore Pavie's story *Les babouches du Brahamane* (c.1840) and the novel *Le Mariage de Loti* by Pierre Loti (1880).

First Performance 1883, Paris

During the British *Raj* in India, the tragic love affair of a British officer and the daughter of a Brahmin Priest.

“Viens, Mallika” The Flower Duet Delibes' *Lakmé*

During the British *Raj* in India:

Lakmé, the beautiful daughter of the Brahmin Priest Nilikantha, and her servant Mallika decide to travel down the river to gather flowers.

Note that Lakmé has removed her jewelry and left them on a rock. It will later be discovered by a handsome young British officer and his companions.

(This being opera, we can rest assured that no good will come of this.)

Two Basses: Dialog

“Il Grand’Inquisitor!” from Verdi’s *Don Carlo*

Nicolai Ghiaurov (b), King Philip II; Ferruccio
Furlinnetto (b), Grand Inquisitor
1983

Orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera, James Levine,
cond.

Don Carlo

Giuseppe Verdi (1813 - 1901)

French Libretto (*Don Carlos*) by Joseph Méry and Camille du Locle after the dramatic play *Don Carlos, Infant von Spanien* (*Don Carlos, Infante of Spain*) by Friedrich Schiller (1787). Italian translation (*Don Carlo*) by Achille de Lauzières.

First (French) Performance 1867, Paris; (Italian) London 1867

The conflicts between Don Carlo, Infante (Prince), and his father, Phillip II, King of Spain.

“Il Grand’Inquisitor!”

Verdi’s *Don Carlo*

King Philip II and his son, Don Carlo are in conflict.

At that time, the Low Countries (Belgium and the Netherlands) are under Spanish domination. As a lover of liberty and justice, Carlo is working to free them,

King Philip is troubled: his own son is acting treasonously. He consults the very old and fanatic Grand Inquisitor.

(Schiller’s dramatic portrayal of Carlo is not at all a true depiction of the historical Carlo.)

Soprano-Bass: Conflict

**“O Engländer! ...”
from Mozart’s
*The Abduction from the Seraglio***

Patrizia Ciofi (s), Blonde; Kurt Rydl (b), Osmin
2002

Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Zubin
Mehta, cond.

The Abduction from the Seraglio

WA Mozart (1756-1791)

Libretto by Gottlieb Stephanie after Christoph Friedrich Bretzner's *Belmont und Constanze, oder Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1781)

First Performance 1782, Vienna

The palace of the Ottoman Pasha Selim: Spanish Lady Constanze and her English maid, Blonde, have been captured by pirates and sold as slaves to Pasha Selim.

Constanze's lover, Belmonte, and his manservant, Pedrillo, have come to rescue them.

“O Engländer! ...”

Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio*

Blonde, maidservant to Constanze, has been given to Pasha Selim's overseer, Osmin. He commands Blonde to obey him.

She refuses, stating that she is an Englishwoman and will not submit to any man.

As Blonde protests, Osmin complains that Englishmen must be fools to allow their women so much freedom.

The interchange is an example of vocal counterpoint, emphasizing the conflict.

Baritone-Soprano: Rejected Love

Final Scene **from Tchaikovski's** ***Eugne Onegin***

Dmitri Hvorostovski (br), Onegin; Renée
Fleming (s), Tatiana
2007

Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Valery Gergiev, cond.
Production by Robert Carsen

Eugene Onegin

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

Libretto by Composer after Alexander Pushkin's novel in verse of the same name (1833)

First Performance 1879, Moscow

Onegin is a handsome, cosmopolitan but selfish aristocrat; Tatiana is an aristocratic but naïve country girl. She falls in love with Onegin who coldly rejects her. Later, he meets her again and falls in love with her.

She admits that she still loves him but she is already married and refuses to compromise her principles.

Final Duet

Tchaikovski's *Eugene Onegin*

Onegin has coldly rejected Tatiana's love. Furthermore, he carelessly provokes his best friend into challenging him to a duel and tragically kills him.

Several years later he attends a lavish ball given by a relative of his, General Prince Gremin. He discovers that Gremin is married to Tatiana, now a beautiful, gracious and sophisticated woman.

Now, Onegin falls in love with her. But she will not leave her husband and rejects him.

Soprano-Mezzo: Trouser Role Happy Ending

Final Love Duet from Richard Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*

Sena Jurinac (ms), Octavian; Anneliese
Rothenberger (s), Sophie
1962 (Remastered Film)

Vienna Philharmonic, Herbert von
Karajan, cond.

Der Rosenkavalier

Richard Strauss (1864 –1949)

Libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal

First Performance 1911, Dresden

Seventeen year old Octavian is the lover of the 30-something Marschallin. Sophie, the daughter of newly-knighted Herr Faninal is betrothed to the boorish Baron Ochs. To formalize the betrothal, Ochs sends Octavian to present a silver rose to Sophie.

The two fall in love, and after considerable turmoil, Ochs is gotten rid of and the two youngsters are united. The Marschallin blesses the union and reconciles herself to her new status as a mature woman.

Presentation of the Rose

Richard Strauss's *der Rosenkavalier*

An inn: The plot has played out. The obnoxious Baron Ochs has been disposed of and Herr Faninal is now pleased to accept Octavian as a son-in-law.

The Marschellin is resigned to giving up Octavian and accepting her new role as a matron.

The two lovers sing an ecstatic love duet.

Thank You



And Good Night!