

Narration by Lou Barrella
Opera at Florham – November 4, 2018
The Demonic and Debonair
The Men We Love and Hate in Opera

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1. **"Largo al factotum"** (Make way for the factotum) is the famous aria from Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*. It is happily sung by the egotistic title character. If we don't remember hearing it at the Opera House, you'll surely know it from TV cartoons. The term "factotum" refers to a general servant and comes from Latin where it literally means "a do it all." We might know that barbers of old did much more than cut hair and Figaro seems to be needed by everyone in town. Today our Figaro is baritone who'll be a joyous barber especially when he sings *Ah, che bel vivere, per un barbiere di qualità!*... "Ah, what a merry life awaits a barber of quality!... Here is our *"barbiere di qualità!"*... [Matthew Ciuffitelli](#)

2. **"Venti scudi"** (Twenty cents) is the humorous duet between a rustic peasant and cosmopolitan travelling salesman from Donizetti's Comic Opera *L'Elisir d'Amore*. In it, the love-struck tenor, "Country Boy" Nemorino, pleads for a bottle of the magic elixir that the "Charlatan: Doctor Dulcamara" is pedaling. He buys the supposed love potion (really just a bottle of wine) with all the money he has in his pocket (20¢). Anyway, joining our baritone for this hilarious duet is today's wonderful tenor, [Frederick Schlick](#).

3. **"Una furtiva lagrima"** (A furtive or secretive tear) is the famous romanza from act 2 of *"L'Elisir"* sung by Nemorino when he finds that the love potion he bought to win the heart of his dream ladylove, Adina, works. This aria is most recognizable by the beautiful introduction played on a solo bassoon. Without an orchestra today, we're so fortunate to have our distinguished accompanist [Mary Pinto](#) to create that haunting introduction for our Nemorino.

4. **"Le veau d'or"** (Song of The Golden Calf) is the vibrant Bass aria from Act 2 of Charles Gounod's Opera *Faust*. Appearing in the midst of a celebration in a 16th century German city, [Méphistophélès](#) or the Devil appears, provides the crowd with wine and sings an irreverent song about men's susceptibility to greed. He finishes by singing that Satan is behind it all. Here to sing this rousing song is today's Demonic but Debonair Bass, [Hidenori Inoue](#).

5. **"Salut! demeure chaste et pure"** (I greet you, chaste and pure dwelling) is the Act 3 tenor aria from Gounod's *Faust*, an opera with many great "hit tunes." The story involves Faust, an old philosopher, who is persuaded to sell his soul to the devil in order to enjoy the pleasures of life that he's never experienced. At this point in the story, Faust has fallen in love with Marguerite and, as he visits her little cottage, he greets the home where Nature has allowed a small girl to become a beautiful and attractive woman. This aria is always anticipated by audiences as we enjoy its lyric beauty and await its crowning high C!

6. **"Chieti, chieti immantinente"** (Very quietly we'll sneak into the garden) is the humorous duet from Act 3 of Donizetti's Comic Opera, *Don Pasquale*. You know, we're so fortunate today to hear music from the 3 regularly performed comic operas that will never go out of the repertoire: Rossini's *Barber* and Donizetti's *L'Elisir* and *Pasquale*. In this story, Don Pasquale a wealthy old bachelor is tricked into a false marriage with Norina. Once he finds out how demanding and difficult his new little wife can be, he's ready for a quick divorce. Norina's brother, Dr. Malatesta, who set up the marriage fraud in the first place, now wants to help his good friend get out of his predicament. They both scheme in this delicious duet about getting it done. By the way, among the characteristics of Opera Buffa is the quick patter singing of many words... It won't make a difference if you don't understand what their saying, you'll be amazed at their performance. Get ready for our wonderful Baritone and Bass to bring some musical laughter into our lives!

7. **"Bella siccome un angelo"** (She's beautiful like an angel) is the Act 1 Baritone aria where Malatesta begins to deceive Pasquale by telling him about this wonderful young girl who just might "fit the bill" for the old bachelor's desire for a wife

and who just so happens to be Malatesta's sister. No matter his deceptive motive, his singing would cause any man, young or old, to be interested in this honest, modest and sweet young woman!

8. Now from the silly *Don Pasquale* to the somber *Don Carlo*...

"Per me giunto è il dì supremo" (For me, it is the supreme day) is the Act 4 aria from Verdi's Grand Opera *Don Carlo*. Let's give today's Baritone a few moments to switch moods and roles as we move from the humorously comic *Don Pasquale* to the seriously dramatic *Don Carlo*. Although some of the characters in *Don Carlo* were real historical persons, the episodes are mostly fictional; and by the time we arrive at this point in the story, Carlo is in prison and Rodrigo, the Duke of Posa and his best friend, comes to visit him with the important news that he has saved Carlos from being executed, by allowing himself to be incriminated by the politically sensitive documents originally in Carlo's possession.

The aria listed in the program is actually a *scena* or complete scene. At the conclusion of the first part, a shadowy figure appears--one of the Grand Inquisitor's assassins--and shoots Posa in the chest. As he dies, Posa tells Carlos that he is content to die if his friend can save Flanders and rule over a happier Spain.

Those of us who love opera know that a dying character never expires without singing beautifully for us before the last breath, and so we hear **"lo morirò, ma lieto in core"** (I will die, but glad in my heart).

9. **"Ella giammai m'amò"** (She never loved me). Now we'll end Part 1 of today's concert on a somber note as we listen to the great Bass aria from Act 4, Scene 1 of *Don Carlo*. King Phillip II of Spain was a real historical person who married Elizabeth of Valois, daughter of the French King during the Great Age of Spanish Exploration and expansion. The problem is that Elizabeth was originally supposed to marry Carlo, and that change of plans caused a breach in the relationship between father and son... at least in the operatic version.

Alone and suffering from insomnia, the King, in a reverie, laments that Elisabeth has never loved him, that his position means that he has to be eternally vigilant and that he will only sleep properly when he is in his tomb in the Royal Palace of the Escorial.