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RICHARD STRAUSS

INTERMEZZO

Elisabeth Söderström

Glyndebourne Festival Opera

London Philharmonic Orchestra

Sir John Pritchard

ARCHIVE EDITION

A BBC recording

RICHARD STRAUSS



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Richard Strauss (1864 – 1949)

Intermezzo

A bourgeois comedy with symphonic interludes in two acts

Libretto by the composer

English translation by Andrew Porter

	Christine	Elisabeth Söderström <i>soprano</i>
Robert Storch, her husband, a conductor		Marco Bakker <i>baritone</i>
Anna, their maid		Elizabeth Gale <i>soprano</i>
Franzl, their eight-year-old son		Richard Allfrey <i>spoken</i>
Baron Lummer		Alexander Oliver <i>tenor</i>
The Notary		Thomas Lawlor <i>bass-baritone</i>
His wife		Rae Woodland <i>soprano</i>
Stroh, another conductor		Anthony Rolfe Johnson <i>tenor</i>
Robert's Skat partners { A Commercial Counsellor		Donald Bell <i>baritone</i>
A Legal Counsellor		Brian Donlan <i>baritone</i>
A Singer		Dennis Wicks <i>bass</i>
Fanny, the Storchs' cook		Barbara Dix <i>spoken</i>
Marie, a maid		Susan Varley <i>spoken</i>
Therese, a maid		Angela Whittingham <i>spoken</i>
Resi, a young girl		Cynthia Buchan <i>soprano</i>
		Glyndebourne Festival Opera
		London Philharmonic Orchestra
		Sir John Pritchard

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[5]	'Gentlemen I'm here at last' <i>Robert, Singer, Stroh, Legal Counsellor, Commercial Counsellor</i>	7:44	[p.54]
[6]	'A wretched business!' <i>Commercial Counsellor, Singer, Legal Counsellor, Stroh</i>	3:34	[p.59]
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[8]	Orchestral interlude	1:46	[p.62]

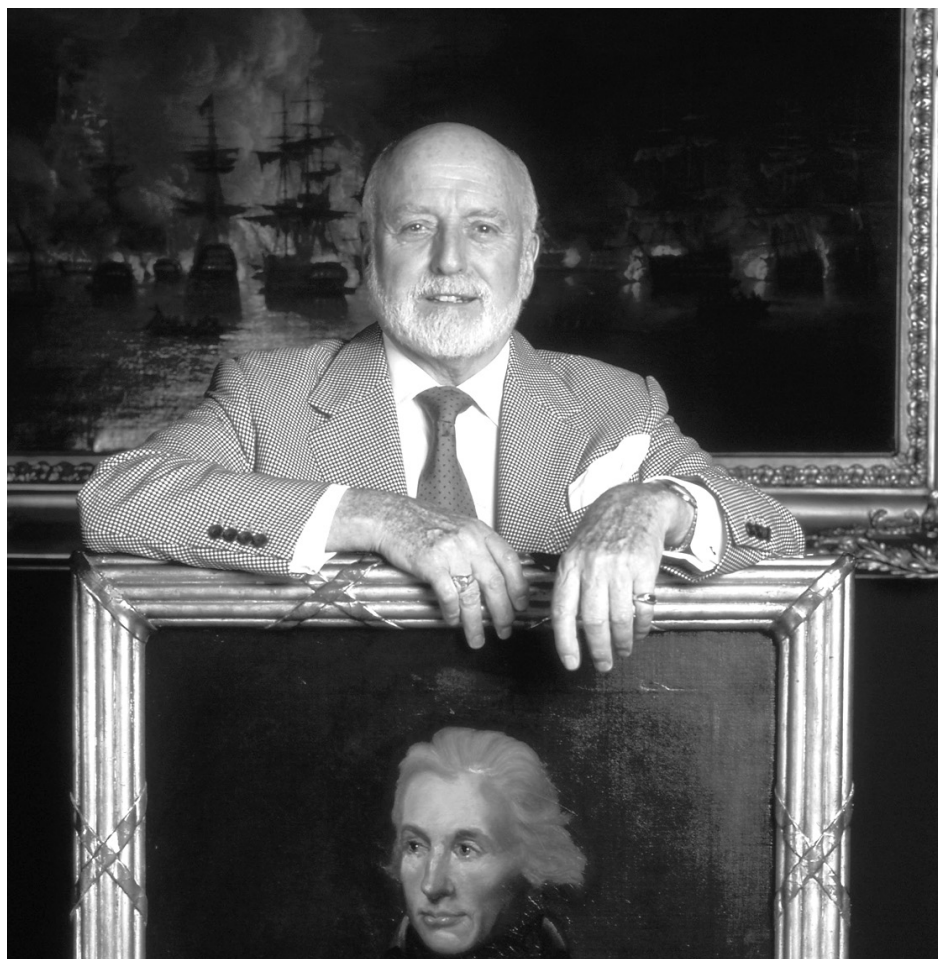
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Elisabeth Söderström brought all her legendary dramatic skills as an actress and singer to her portrayal of the composer's wife in *Intermezzo*, Richard Strauss's bitter-sweet comedy based on true episodes in his marriage to the tempestuous Pauline. Thanks to Söderström's insistence, one of Strauss's least-known but wittiest works was sung in English when given its British premiere at Glyndebourne in 1974. We are indebted to her and to the BBC for this live radio recording, which has enabled us both to capture Söderström's artistry whilst introducing this most intimate of Strauss's operas to new audiences on our Archive label.

A handwritten signature in white ink on a dark rectangular background. The signature reads "Peter Moores" in a cursive, flowing script.

Sir Peter Moores, CBE, DL
January 2011

Sir Peter Moores with a portrait of Admiral Lord Nelson
by Lemuel Francis Abbott, acquired for Compton Verney
© Lyndon Parker



ELISABETH SÖDERSTRÖM

(1927–2009)

Over twenty-five years, during the period 1956–80, Glyndebourne signed Elisabeth Söderström on for thirteen Festivals. She had to cancel her contracts in 1956 (Pamina) and 1958 (Anne Trulove) due to pregnancy but, with the maternal urge otherwise tamed, she managed to embrace ten different roles at Glyndebourne during this period – quite a chunk of her career.

Her first appearance at Glyndebourne was in the role of the Composer in the Prologue to *Ariadne*, a role which had up to that point been the exclusive preserve of Sena Jurinac – a singer *sans pareille*, it was thought, until the arrival of Elisabeth, who took the role by the horns and the audience by storm.

In 1959 she performed Oktavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*, with Régine Crespin as the Marschallin and Anneliese Rothenberger as Sophie – a trio of singers which sent me rushing in search of my old 78s to compare these celestial voices with those on the famous pre-war recording with Lehmann, Schumann and Olczewska. The Glyndebourne trio won the competition – but, then, they perhaps had the advantage of the added dimension of a staging by Carl Ebert in Oliver Messel's designs, a dimension which these three singers exploited with utter conviction.

Elisabeth's performances in the Strauss comedies (the Composer, Oktavian, the Countess in *Capriccio*, which she sang in four Glyndebourne Festivals, and Christine in *Intermezzo*, which she sang in two Festivals) stick indelibly in the memory; but, then, her portrayal of Tatyana in *Onegin* was in my

experience unsurpassed – and her Leonora in *Fidelio* (not a role she would have contemplated in a larger theatre) brought myriad insights into the quandary and aspirations of this role, insights which can't be nearly so exposed in larger theatres.

I longed for her to take on the role of Elle in Poulenc's *La Voix humaine* (a one-acter which Glyndebourne premiered in 1960 with Denise Duval, and Cocteau as director and designer) – a hope sadly unfulfilled... Come to that I longed for her to take on a multitude of roles, such was the huge compass of her versatility. In one particular year (1959) she sang Sophie at the Met, Oktavian at Glyndebourne and the Marschallin in Stockholm – at which point she must, more than any other singer, have had the measure of Ochs.

She had a voice of distinctive quality which she used to huge communicative effect. She was a consummate singer/actress – a mistress of bathos and an exquisite comedienne. She was beguilingly beautiful. Audiences fell in love with her as did her team-mates on stage – and off-stage.

At Glyndebourne she reigned supreme. There was no lack of rivals, but she had an indefinable quality which made her the unquestioned, unchallenged queen.

Sir George Christie CH, President, Glyndebourne Productions
*This tribute first appeared in **Opera** magazine, February 2010*

ELISABETH SÖDERSTRÖM



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MARCO BAKKER &
ELISABETH SÖDERSTRÖM

Söderström's *Intermezzo*

The 1970s saw the adoption of Richard Strauss, alongside Mozart, as the principal house composer at Glyndebourne. The decade saw productions of *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Capriccio*, *Intermezzo*, *Die schweigsame Frau*, *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Arabella*. I had the good fortune to direct these operas and the even greater blessing of Elisabeth Söderström's participation in two of them.

Söderström had been a deeply loved artist with the company from 1957 until 1963, when the demands of an expanded international career and raising a family broke the continuity for a while. The Strauss cycle provided just the right opportunity for her return to the Sussex family with a restudied *Capriccio* set in the 1920s, followed by *Intermezzo*, an unknown quantity to the artist and just about everybody involved.

Intermezzo is an autobiographical opera and as such was viewed with distaste by many of Strauss's friends and collaborators, including the composer's usual librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal, who refused

to write the libretto, and Strauss's wife Pauline, whom Strauss designated as the principal subject and who fought it all the way to the triumphant premiere and beyond.

The proposed production was decisive in Söderström's agreement to return to Glyndebourne. First, it gave scope to her brilliant gift for comedy, an aspect of her talent not much seen before, at Glyndebourne or anywhere else. Second, it was a plum role for a female singer whose presence in twelve out of fourteen scenes was accompanied by a sequence of spectacular costumes; a ball, the ski slopes, the bedroom and the nursery, among others. Third, it was a powerful expression of the feminine character in the full emotional gamut from maternal tenderness through wounded outrage to intense conjugal love, but within a strong moral assertion of female independence. Her emotional changes were as striking and as rapid as her costume changes, and, exhausting as these must have been, taken together, it never showed. There was never

any doubt that Söderström would make a worthy successor to the creator of the role, Lotte Lehmann.

Perhaps the most striking detail about the show was that it was given in English translation, a major breach of the Glyndebourne rule. Söderström insisted that if she were to perform such a massive role which was – more than any other operatic role she had previously undertaken – an acting role, then the audience must understand the text. In this her chief ally was Richard Strauss himself, who in his preface to the work had made the same point and reinforced it by insisting that the premiere in Dresden be given at the smaller Staatstheater and not the opera house. Glyndebourne management agreed to this without too much resistance and I got in touch with Andrew Porter, the doyen of translators then, and at that time in Sydney for the opening of the new opera house. He not only agreed to do it, but also to attend rehearsals and finetune his text as we used it. It was a fruitful and happy collaboration with, in my view, an excellent outcome.

Intermezzo has been called Strauss's most original work, and in theatrical terms it is. To begin with the subject matter is defiantly commonplace, totally at odds with the classicism and rococo of his previous works. Seeking Hofmannsthal's collaboration he asked for 'an entirely modern, absolutely realistic domestic and character comedy'. Hofmannsthal's response was unequivocal: 'The things you propose to me are to my taste truly horrid.' Strauss also approached the critic Herrmann Barr, but when the latter discovered that the subject was to be autobiographical, based on an incident in 1907 with the central role the formidable Frau Strauss, he took cover behind the flattering and entirely sound proposal that Strauss should write his own libretto – who better?

It took Strauss only a week to complete the libretto and it was of sufficient quality for the great Max Reinhardt to declare that it should be staged as a play. There are fourteen scenes in all, two of them in Vienna, including one in the Prater during a thunderstorm, and the rest in the mountain resort of Grundlsee, comprising

various rooms in the Storchs' house, a toboggan run, a dance hall, a lawyer's office and a furnished room. One scene barely lasts three minutes, the longest is just over twenty, but all are separated by full orchestral interludes descriptive of the foregoing or upcoming scenes, with a fuller exploration of the emotional and psychological issues raised, but often merely alluded to, in the action itself. Comparison with the cinema has been made, but the interludes suggest rather reel changes than cuts from one location to the next; whether the composer would have sacrificed the principal musical content of the opera in the face of today's instantaneous scenic technology is a matter for speculation. As a director, I would certainly not have sacrificed Martin Battersby's sensitive, witty and supremely skilled images which accompanied each interlude, a kind of daguerrotype, but completely 'hand dotted' and projected onto a front cloth.

Much to Frau Strauss's irritation, the opera was a resounding success. Even Hofmannsthal conceded 'You have striven here for a new style (starting from what is

suggested in the 'Ariadne' Vorspiel) and you have achieved what you wanted.'

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John Cox directed the 1974 Glyndebourne production of Intermezzo

SYNOPSIS

The action takes place in Grunlsee and Vienna, Austria, 1924

COMPACT DISC ONE

Act I

Scene 1

The bedroom, 7am

[1]–[2] Robert Storch, a famous composer and busy conductor, lives in this small mountain resort with his wife Christine and their eight-year-old son Franzl. Robert is in the final stages of packing for a two-month-long conducting engagement in Vienna. He is assisted by Anna, the efficient and long-suffering maid, whose task is not made easier by Christine. Tensions run high. Christine's unhappiness at her husband's impending absence is masked by quarrelsome

interventions and claims of neglect. A furious row ensues as the sleigh arrives to take Robert to the station.

[3] Anna is doing Christine's hair. Anna has nothing but admiration and affection for her master, which only serves to irritate Christine further. In the ensuing conversation we understand more of her volatile temperament, her pride in her husband's fame and success, but also her resentment at being a lonely wife and a second fiddle.

[4] Suddenly, Christine is invited out ice skating and her mood brightens.

Scene 2

Winter sport

[5]–[6] Christine, on a toboggan, has a collision with a young man on skis. Her fury and pain are immediately forgotten when she discovers that he is a baron and the son of a military colleague of her father. She invites him to visit her.

Scene 3

At the ball

[7]–[8] Christine and Baron Lummer are enjoying a ball at the local hotel. The Baron

is in Grundlsee for the cure, so Christine makes herself responsible for his health.

Scene 4

A furnished room

[9]–[10] Christine rents a room for Lummer in her lawyer's house. She is punctilious about cleanliness and the furnishings, especially the bed.

Scene 5

The dining room

[11] Christine is writing to her husband while Franzl is having a piano lesson upstairs. She chooses her words about Baron Lummer very carefully, convincing herself that Robert will approve of her new friend. She protests, but not in the letter, her right to a life of her own.

Meanwhile, the Baron has become a regular guest, especially at meal times. Here he is again. He helps her with her accounts, reveals that he has another engagement for the evening, provoking a little jealousy thereby, [12] then they sit and read separate newspapers together.

[13]–[15] Lummer, bored to death, finally comes to the point. He wants to borrow

money 'to fund his studies.' Christine advises him to ask her husband. When he expresses his doubts at this she explains that her husband always does exactly as she tells him. The Baron leaves, totally confused by the possible course of this relationship.

Scene 6

The furnished room

[16] Baron Lummer mulls over the situation. It is finally clear that Christine is so naïve that she really believes all the lines he shoots about health and studies. Should he perhaps make a frank declaration of love? This he does in a letter. Meanwhile, his 'date' for the evening calls for him.

COMPACT DISC TWO

Scene 7

The dining room

[1] Christine is incensed by the letter, which includes a request for a thousand marks. Lummer arrives unannounced to press his claim on her, but he is given short shrift. Then a letter arrives addressed

to her husband, which she opens at once. It's from a young woman making an assignation 'in the bar as usual. Your own Mitzi Mayer'. Christine draws the only possible conclusion and decides to leave her husband immediately. She sends him a telegram to this effect and orders Anna to start packing. The Baron has long since fled.

Scene 8

The nursery

[2] Christine seeks consolation with Franzl. He refuses to hear a word against his father.

Act II

Vienna and Grundlsee

Scene 1

Vienna. A game of Skat

[3] Prelude. [4]–[6] Robert Storch is playing Skat, his favourite card game, with a group of friends when the fateful telegram arrives from Christine. He is thunderstruck and gives it to Stroh, his chorusmaster, to read. It emerges that Stroh knows Mitzi Mayer, and he assumes that Robert and he have both been using her services. Robert is furious and quits the party.

Scene 2

Grundlsee

[7] Christine goes to the lawyer to institute divorce proceedings. He assumes it is because of her affair with his lodger, Baron Lummer, so the meeting starts badly. Things get worse when she produces her ‘evidence’ and refuses to put it to any test. The lawyer refuses the case. [8] Orchestral interlude.

Scene 3

Vienna. The Prater. A serious thunderstorm

[9] Robert is beside himself with worry. Christine will not answer the phone or reply to telegrams. Stroh finds him with the news that it is all a matter of mistaken identity – Stroh/Storch! Mitzi had got the wrong name, looked it up in the directory and sent the note to the wrong address. Robert is mightily relieved, but far from grateful. He orders Stroh to take the first train to Grundlsee and reveal all to Christine. [10] Orchestral postlude.

Scene 4 *Grundlsee*

[11] [Introduction]. [12] Christine is leaving home and the packing is well underway. Meanwhile, she has sent Lummer to

Vienna to seek out Mitzi Mayer and the truth. A telegram arrives and this time Anna persuades her to read it. Shortly afterwards, Stroh arrives from Vienna.

Scene 5

The dining room

[13] [Introduction]. [14] The house at Grundlsee is *en fête* for Robert’s imminent return. Christine is excited and delighted, but is determined not to show it, unlike the female staff. Robert arrives and she engages him at once in a terrible row. Robert goes to his room in a fury.

Scene 6

The same scene

[15] Lummer has unwittingly travelled back from Vienna on the same train as Robert. He hurries in to report on his enquiries, but Christine brushes it all aside. Her beloved, blameless husband is upstairs. [16]–[17] She offers to introduce them but the Baron declines, leaving as Robert descends the stairs.

After divulging a few more details about Baron Lummer and some further haggling over guilt and blame, Christine and

Robert are reconciled and Christine, over breakfast, pays tribute to their perfect marriage.

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Elisabeth Söderström (Christine) was born in Stockholm and studied there at the Royal Academy of Music and Opera School. At the age of twenty she made her debut as Mozart's Bastienne at the Drottningholm Court Theatre. She joined the Swedish Royal Opera, where she remained a member for the duration of her career. She pursued an international career in a wide variety of roles including Nero (*The Coronation of Poppea*), Countess Almaviva and Susanna (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*), Octavian and Marschallin (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Mélisande (*Pelléas et Mélisande*), Ellen Orford (*Peter Grimes*), the Governess (*The Turn of the Screw*), the title role in *Jenůfa* and Emilia Marty (*The Makropulos Case*).

In 1957 she made her Glyndebourne debut as the Composer (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), and her relationship with that

company was to last for over twenty years, with roles including Tatiana, Elisabeth Zimmer in the British premiere of Henze's *Elegy for Young Lovers*, Countess (*Capriccio*), and Leonora (*Fidelio*). Her Metropolitan Opera debut in 1959 was as Susanna, and she first appeared at Covent Garden in 1960 as Daisy Dodd (Blomdahl's *Aniara*) with the Royal Swedish Opera. She made her Australian debut in 1982 as Emilia Marty.

Elisabeth Söderström often appeared in concert and recital. Her many recordings included songs of Sibelius and three volumes of Rachmaninov Songs with Vladimir Ashkenazy, *Missa Solemnis* under Otto Klemperer, *The Makropulos Case*, *Jenůfa* and *Katya Kabanova* under Sir Charles Mackerras, and *The Coronation of Poppea* under Nikolaus Harnoncourt.

In retirement she gave many masterclasses, and from 1993 to 1996 she was director of the Drottningholm Palace Theatre. For her services to British music she was appointed honorary CBE in 1985.

Marco Bakker (Robert) studied at the Amsterdam Conservatoire and made his debut in Ton de Leeuw's opera *The Dream* at the Holland Festival. In 1973 he undertook a tour of the United States, giving eighteen concerts. After singing in *The Pearl Fishers* and Bellini's *Il pirata* at the Wexford Festival he sang the roles of Robert Storch and the title role in *Eugene Onegin* at Glyndebourne. He sang many roles in operetta, including Danilo (*The Merry Widow*) and is sought after as a concert artist.

For the past eighteen years Marco Bakker has presented a radio programme, *The Music Breakfast*, in Utrecht, and he has made more than eighty-nine recordings. In 2006 for Opera Zuid he sang the role of Nourabad (*The Pearl Fishers*) followed by Water Sprite (*Rusalka*). He has also sung the role of Deuteronomy in the musical *Cats*.

Elizabeth Gale (Anna) studied at the Guildhall School of Music and made her debut in 1970 as Cupid (*King Arthur*) with the English Opera Group, going on to perform Flora (*The Turn of the Screw*)

at the Aldeburgh Festival. She sang the role of Papagena (*The Magic Flute*) at Glyndebourne in 1973 and returned there each year until 1986. Roles there included Susanna, (*The Marriage of Figaro*) Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*), Drusilla (*Dioclesian*), Titania (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and Marzelline (*Fidelio*). She made her Covent Garden debut as Jano (*Jenůfa*) and subsequently performed the roles of Zerlina, Adele (*Die Fledermaus*) and Miss Wordsworth (*Albert Herring*). Elizabeth Gale sang with English National Opera and made her American debut in 1986 in Poulenc's *La Voix humaine*. Her recordings include Amore (*Orfeo ed Euridice*) under Raymond Leppard, Zerlina under Bernard Haitink, *Messiah* under Nikolaus Harnoncourt and a DVD recording of Mrs Julian (*Owen Wingrave*) under Kent Nagano.

Born and educated in Scotland, **Alexander Oliver** (Baron Lummer) completed his studies in Vienna, after winning the Richard Tauber Competition. He made his professional debut in 1968 with Glyndebourne Touring Opera as

Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*) and went on to appear with all the major British companies, in particular Glyndebourne and The Royal Opera. His international debut came in 1972 with the Netherlands Opera as Arnalta in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. This role was to take him to most of the major European opera houses, including Berlin, Munich, Vienna and La Scala and led to many major engagements all over the world. Known as a character tenor he became particularly renowned for his interpretations of roles such as Basilio (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Arbace (*Idomeneo*), Monostatos (*The Magic Flute*), the title role in *Albert Herring*, and Iro (*The Return of Ulysses*). He performed this latter role at the Netherlands Opera and on tour with that company in New York and Sydney, as well as at English National Opera and with the Canadian Opera Company.

Alexander Oliver's long career saw him work alongside conductors including Bernard Haitink, Sir Colin Davis, Sir Simon Rattle, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Seiji Ozawa, Raphael Kubelik, Sir John

Pritchard, Andre Previn and Antonio Pappano. Since 1999 he has been the Artistic Director of the Dutch National Opera Academy in the Netherlands where he now lives.

Bass-baritone **Thomas Lawlor** (Notary) was born and educated in Dublin. He studied singing at the Guildhall School of Music, and joined the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company chorus in September 1963. In 1971 he left to join Glyndebourne. His repertoire encompassed roles in opera and operetta and he performed with The Royal Opera and English National Opera. His recordings include performances of Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and he has taken part in a number of televised operas. After holding posts in the opera departments of the Royal Academy of Music and of Trinity College of Music in London, he is now a member of the music faculty of Rhode Island College, where he teaches voice and directs in the Opera Workshop. He is the founder and artistic director of Beavertail Opera Productions in Rhode Island.

Anthony Rolfe Johnson (Stroh) was born in Oxfordshire and studied at agricultural college before settling into farming life. After joining a local choir he began to study at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with Ellis Keeler and Vera Rózsa, and later with Peter Pears. He made his Purcell Room debut in 1973, and began to perform with the English Opera Group, with whom he sang Vaudémont (Tchaikovsky's *Iolanthe*) and *Albert Herring*. He sang in the Chorus at Glyndebourne, going on to perform the roles of Stroh and Lensky (*Eugene Onegin*). In 1978 he made his English National Opera debut as Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), and went on to sing Tamino (*The Magic Flute*), Essex (*Gloriana*) and the title role in *The Return of Ulysses*.

One of his most notable roles was that of Aschenbach (*Death in Venice*) which he sang at the Geneva Opera, for Scottish Opera and at the Metropolitan Opera. He sang the title role in *Peter Grimes* for Scottish Opera, at Glyndebourne and at the Metropolitan Opera. Other notable successes were Tito (*La clemenza*

di Tito) which he recorded under John Eliot Gardiner, and Pelléas (*Pelléas et Mélisande*). His link with Britten and Pears remained strong and during the 1980s he taught regularly at Snape, being appointed Director of the Britten – Pears School in 1990. He was appointed an OBE in 1992.

The Canadian **Donald Bell** (Commercial Director) began his studies with Nancy Paisley Benn in Vancouver. After attending the Royal College of Music in London he studied with Hermann Weissenborn in Berlin, Judith Boroschek in Düsseldorf and Richard Miller in Oberlin. In 1955 he appeared at Glyndebourne and at the Berlin State Opera, later making his recital debut at London's Wigmore Hall. He appeared at the Bayreuth Festivals in roles in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *Parsifal*, *Lohengrin* and in *Tristan und Isolde* with Birgit Nielson. He was a member of the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf, where roles included the title role in *Don Giovanni*, Count Almaviva (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Wolfram (*Tannhäuser*), Amfortas

(*Parsifal*), and Kurwenal (*Tristan und Isolde*). In addition to the standard repertoire, he devoted much time to furthering the cause of contemporary music, singing in the Irish and Italian premieres of Britten's *War Requiem*, as well as Tippett's *A Child of our Time* and Peter Maxwell Davies' *Eight Songs for a Mad King*.

Recordings include *St Matthew Passion* under Leonard Bernstein and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony under George Szell. Donald Bell returned to Canada and began a teaching career, and is currently Professor of Voice at the University of Calgary.

Dennis Wicks (Opera Singer) was born in Sussex. Originally a joiner, he took singing lessons and joined the Glyndebourne Chorus, making his solo debut with the company in 1950 as Antonio (*The Marriage of Figaro*) at the Edinburgh Festival. Other smaller roles followed and he covered some more major ones. He made his Covent Garden debut in 1962 as Baron Duphol (*La traviata*) and his many other roles there included Foltz (*Die*

Meistersinger von Nürnberg), the Sergeant in the British premiere of Shostakovich's *Katerina Ismailov* and Luther (*The Tales of Hoffmann*). At Glyndebourne he sang Mr Lynch in the premiere of Nicholas Maw's *The Rising of the Moon*, the Pastor in Gottfried von Einem's *The Visit of the Old Lady*, and the Opera Singer in *Intermezzo*. After singing the role of Dr Bartolo (*The Marriage of Figaro*) for Sadler's Wells Opera (soon to become English National Opera) he spent the rest of his career with that company. Roles with English National Opera included Sarastro (*The Magic Flute*), Osmin (*The Abduction from the Seraglio*), Baron Ochs (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Brother Vicente (Iain Hamilton's *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*), Commendatore (*Don Giovanni*), Varlaam (*Boris Godunov*), and Daland (*The Flying Dutchman*).

Sir John Pritchard was born in London, the son of an orchestral violinist. He later studied viola and piano, and conducting with Sir Henry Wood. In 1947 he joined the music staff at Glyndebourne, and two years later became chorus master and

assistant to Fritz Busch. Standing in for Busch during a performance of *Don Giovanni* in 1951 marked his conducting debut with the company. He was Music Counsellor at Glyndebourne from 1963, Music Director from 1969 to 1978, and conducted the British premiere of Henze's *Elegy for Young Lovers* in 1961.

He made his debut with the Vienna State Opera in 1951 and at Covent Garden in 1952 with *Un ballo in maschera*, later conducting premieres of *Gloriana*, *The Midsummer Marriage* and *King Priam*. His American opera debut came in 1969 with *The Barber of Seville*, and in 1971 he conducted *Così fan tutte* at the Metropolitan Opera. He

was appointed Musical Director of the London Philharmonic Orchestra from 1962 to 1966 and undertook conducting engagements throughout Europe and the Far East. His later permanent posts were Chief Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra (1982–89), and Musical Director of the Cologne Opera (1978), the Théâtre de la Monnaie, Brussels (1981), and the San Francisco Opera (1986). He was made a CBE in 1962 and knighted in 1983.

Sir John Pritchard's recordings include *Lucia of Lammermoor* and *La traviata* with Joan Sutherland, *Idomeneo*, *The Coronation of Poppea*, *The Elixir of Love*, and *Hansel and Gretel*.

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

British philanthropist Sir Peter Moores established the Peter Moores Foundation in 1964. Through the Foundation he has disbursed millions of pounds to a wide variety of arts, environmental, social and educational causes 'to get things done and open doors for people'.

The story behind *Opera in English*, the award-winning label launched in 1995 by Chandos and the Peter Moores Foundation, goes back more than forty years to the moment when Peter Moores was bowled over by the impact of hearing Reginald Goodall conduct *The Valkyrie*, sung in English at the London Coliseum. He determined to get the whole 'English' *Ring* recorded for a wider audience and for future generations. A linguist himself, Sir Peter recognised, nevertheless, that nothing 'speaks to the heart' so directly as hearing the drama of opera expressed in your own language. Encouraging the first-time listener to 'give opera a go' has been a key element in building the *Opera in English* catalogue, hence the emphasis on recording mainstream repertoire with a roster of great artists who relish communicating the English text. Today the *Opera in English* catalogue forms the largest collection in the world of operas sung in English translation.

Sir Peter's philanthropic work began with his passion for opera: in his twenties he helped a number of young artists in the crucial, early stages of their careers, including the then relatively unknown Joan Sutherland and Colin Davis. After he established the Peter Moores Foundation, many more young singers were supported through scholarships and bursaries, several achieving international recognition, including Barry Banks, Alice Coote, Simon Keenlyside, Mary Plazas, Amanda Roocroft and Toby Spence.

In live music performance, the Foundation has encouraged the creation of new work and schemes to attract new audiences, financed the publication of scores, especially for world premieres of modern operas, and enabled rarely heard works to be staged by British opera companies and festivals. It has also enabled Opera Rara to record rare *bel canto* repertoire which would otherwise have remained inaccessible to the general public. For further information about Sir Peter and his Foundation's work, including initiatives in business studies at Oxford University, and the establishment of Compton Verney Art Gallery in Warwickshire, visit www.pmf.org.uk

Sir Peter Moores was born in Lancashire and educated at Eton College and Christ Church, Oxford. He was a student at the Vienna Academy of Music, where he produced the Austrian premiere of Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, and at the same time was an assistant producer with the Vienna State Opera, working with Viennese artists in Naples, Geneva and Rome, before returning to England in 1957 to join his father's business, Littlewoods. He was Vice-Chairman of Littlewoods in 1976, Chairman from 1977 to 1980 and remained a director until 1993.

He received the Gold Medal of the Italian Republic in 1974, an Honorary MA from Christ Church, Oxford, in 1975, and was made an Honorary Member of the Royal Northern College of Music in 1985. In 1992 he was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire by HM the Queen. He was appointed CBE in 1991 and received a Knighthood in 2003 for his charitable services to the arts. In July 2008 he received the Stauffer Medal, the highest award of Germany's Baden-Württemberg Province, and in October 2008 was made an Hon. DLitt. of the University of the West Indies.

COMPACT DISC ONE

Act I

Scene 1

In the dressing-room. Before the departure of the Husband, open travel cases. Great disorder. 7.00am

The Wife

¹ Anna, Anna! Where can the silly creature be?

The Husband (*engaged in packing, his Wife helping*)

Do stop complaining! You'll drive them mad and they'll all leave us!

The Wife

Then I'll get better ones!

The Husband

You'll never find such excellent maids as ours easily!

The Wife

I shall!

The Husband

You're over confident, you won't find it easy, not in these days!

The Wife

There's always someone!

The Husband

Then all the interviews, the fussing, the training of them! One summer you had as many cooks in turn as you had doctors, you got through fifteen at least!

The Wife (*triumphantly*)

And in the end did I not employ the one I wanted?

The Husband

But can you keep her?

The Wife

Are you trying to quarrel?

The Husband

Not quarrelling, just warning you.

The Wife

Don't need a warning like that!

The Husband

More than you think – without me to guide you, you would land right in a ditch and your temper with you.

The Wife

You'd better think of leaving!

The Husband

We've still got half an hour before the sleigh arrives.

The Wife

Perhaps you've forgotten you've not had breakfast!

The Husband

– only takes five minutes!

The Wife

I insist that you eat a proper breakfast! For your nerves –

The Husband

– never better!

The Wife

I'll be so glad when at last you've left us – Anna, Anna, here!

Anna (*from outside*)

At once, gnä' Frau; I'm just closing the trunks.

The Wife (*calling to her*)

And do not forget to give the keys to the master!

The Husband

Why should she forget!

The Wife

And the ten days in Palermo which we spent sitting on our luggage because she lost the keyring –

The Husband

That's because you were with me; and you cause such confusion when you're travelling –

The Wife

Don't start that again! Oh God, how I am longing for some peace when I'm alone here.

The Husband

As if I have ever troubled you!

The Wife

Simply by being here you get in my way, your perpetual presence, other husbands go off to the office – (*moaning*) and the extra work you make.

The Husband

But not for you!

The Wife

For whom then?

The Husband

For our poor servants –

The Wife

But it's I who give the orders here. I have to supervise everything, and be sure that everything's right – when you're here – why, the telephone never stops ringing.

The Husband
Why don't you leave the servants to answer?

The Wife
Then who would ever tidy up?

The Husband
I know, don't tell me, it all falls on you!

The Wife
Well, on whom if not on me? Choosing the menus?

The Husband
That's a pleasure, not a labour!

The Wife
And sweeping, dusting, the kitchen, the cellar, the attic, do you think that's not work?

The Husband
You're talking nonsense!

The Wife
The garden –

The Husband
The gardener does it better by himself.

The Wife
And who would pay the house accounts –

The Husband
I would pay the bills gladly –

The Wife
And you'd pay them twice over! And the ordering, the groceries.

The Husband (*drily*)
That's something I know you really can do – but it's hardly serious kind of work.

The Wife
Not the kind, maybe, that all you men can hope to understand!

The Husband
I understand, I'm not such a fool.

The Wife (*sighing*)
And thinking the whole day through

The Husband
Does thinking seem such a hard strenuous labour then?

The Wife
The hardest of all: for me at least – exhausting!

The Husband
You see that is just where I beg to differ! And only thinking that's fruitful, the artists, or the scholars, the true creators, that is real thinking and working like that should be enjoyment too: for me work is a pleasure.

The Wife
Working is never a pleasure.

The Husband
Then give it up! No need for you do it!

The Wife
And the house...

The Husband
Would not come to grief, life would merely be rather more simple.

The Wife
And everything here would very quickly go to pieces.

The Husband
Oh come, you old charwoman! When thousands and thousands of families live their lives more simply and perhaps rather more smoothly than we.

The Wife (*furiously*)
Then death would be better!

The Husband (*satirically*)
Though life would be better!

The Wife (*sneering*)
Of course, the way that you were raised, you never knew anything else!

The Husband
You talk as if you were born in a castle and raised like a queen.

The Wife (*furiously*)
We know about your relations. Don't you dare compare them with my distinguished family!

The Husband (*pointing to his head*)
The distinction comes from here!

The Wife
Finish your packing, you plebeian!

The Husband
Look, you'd do better to go back to bed, instead of inflicting your beastly morning moods on me, carrying on and shouting and finding the same old boring excuse for a quarrel, at a time when I'm trying to keep my head and racking my brains to be certain that everything's packed!

The Wife
That's what I am here for!

The Husband
No, you jut confuse me and Anna.

The Wife
Have you your woolly muffler?

The Husband (*checking*)

I think so, yes.

The Wife

Button hook and your gloves, toilet water?

The Husband

What has Anna ever forgotten?

The Wife (*mockingly triumphant*)

Only the keys of those six trunks in Palermo!

The Husband (*already impatient*)

And now you can talk to yourself – breakfast time!

(*He goes quickly into the next room.*)

(*Anna rushes in, busying herself with the hand luggage.*)

The Wife

- [2] Have you got all the master's things? The sandwiches, the ham rolls, the thermos flask of hot milk? Is the cake securely packed? Will the raspberry juice not run over? Ten hard-boiled eggs – most nourishing. It's so important when working hard that one is nourished properly. Anna, don't you agree the master's in a nervous state?

Anna

No, gnä' Frau, not that I can see.

The Wife

Let us hope that nothing happens on the journey! Has he got his medicine? His patent gargle? The compress?

Anna

All packed, gnä' Frau.

The Wife

I confess I'll be so glad when he's got off safely!

Anna

And then gnädige Frau will grieve, crying every morning and evening, so sad all the long day through.

The Wife

Oh well, with the child alone in the empty house in this small tedious peasant town!

Anna

Gnädige Frau, it is such lovely weather, why not go tobogganing today?

The Wife

You know that bores me. Oh well – if you think so! You've not forgotten to pack his extra pillow?

Anna

Of course not. (*goes into next room*)

(*The Husband re-enters and silently gathers the last travel items together.*)

The Wife (*challengingly*)

Have you nothing to say?

The Husband

No, you'd only quarrel.

The Wife (*flaring up*)

In my view, when you go off, leave me for two months you should have a very serious conversation with your wife.

The Husband

Yes, if my wife were reasonable.

The Wife

You are insulting.

The Husband

Well, you're not exactly charming either.

The Wife

I will not allow such a tone!

The Husband

Ha, then I? What should I say to you then?

The Wife (*contemptuously*)

You, you, you are a royal musician.

The Husband

That's right, and in your opinion that means I'm less than nothing.

The Wife

Not quite – only I hate this living in public, the artistic milieu and all that goes with it – all the life of an artist: and your shameless librettists, revealing their adventures so that all the world can hear them, and then the conductor, who to amuse the well-fed public in the stalls, with baton in hand, lays bare his burning blazing passions and in 4/4 time beats them! Disgusting!

The Husband

Well, you should have considered all that before we married! I never learnt anything else! Far too late for me to change.

The Wife (*impatiently*)

Now it's high time you started.

The Husband

Well then, goodbye! Are you really sure you've let off steam enough – enough to last two whole months?

The Wife

Not nearly enough: it's quite useless, you won't understand.

The Husband

Not so, I think I understand you better than you yourself. Now be good, we've only got a few more minutes, before –

Anna (*enters and announces*)
The sleigh has arrived.

The Husband
So soon? Adieu, I'm off then! But don't I get one small kiss on parting? What have I done to make you cross?

The Wife
Nothing. I just find you disgusting.

The Husband
Oh come, you cannot mean what you say.

The Wife
I'll be glad when at last you've left me!

The Husband
What if something happened on the way – you'd be sorry then.

The Wife
Oh heaven help us, what?

The Husband
I might fall sick, heart attack – or maybe pneumonia – a murder – an accident, a train crash.

The Wife
Be careful then, be sure you sit in the middle carriages, not in the front or the back!

The Husband
If possible, yes.

The Wife
And be sure you've cooled down before you go into the cold, turn your fur collar up high, keep your mouth closed, don't stay up late...

The Husband
Yes, yes.

The Wife
For early to bed...

The Husband
I know that. And now, goodbye!

The Wife (*embraces him impetuously*)
Adieu! Keep well for me!

The Husband
You too. And write now and then!

The Wife (*again disagreeably*)
I shan't have any time to write.

The Husband
Oh, come now...

The Wife
In any case I don't care to; don't bother to write to me either!

The Husband (*ardently*)
But, but, I –

The Wife
Don't send me your press cuttings.

The Husband
Do you mean that?

The Wife
I never do read them, they just lie around here gathering dust.

The Husband
But I must write: I shall miss you badly – when I'm far away I need to feel in touch with you.

The Wife
But I don't.

The Husband (*furiously*)
Well then, to hell with you. Keep your letters, you unendurable scrubbing-brush you! Adieu!

The Wife
Goodbye! Don't miss the train now! (*at the dressing table*)
[3] And now I'll have my hair done! Did you remember to order the shirts for Bubi?

Anna (*beginning to do the Wife's hair*)
I did, gnä' Frau.

The Wife
And my bodice – the buttons?

Anna
Finished.

The Wife (*leaps up, runs to the window with a lorgnette*)
Is he still down there?

Anna
He's waving from the sleigh.

The Wife (*hides herself behind the curtain*)
Oh why must he always travel? (*slowly returns to the dressing table*)

Anna
The master I think does not like to stay too long in one place.

The Wife (*mocking*)
That's true; I suspect there's more than a drop of Jewish blood there!

Anna (*continuing with the hair*)
And then his splendid career.

The Wife
Splendid career. So it's now your turn to start.

Anna
He's so famous.

The Wife

Ha! I thank you for the honour! Then when he's dead, perfect strangers will wonder from idle curiosity whether such a great composer's wife has proved that she was worthy of her better half. And that's why I insisted my husband's dear biographers were ordered not to mention my name. One must preserve the right to remain a private person in one's own right. Ow! If you go on like that, you'll pull all my hair right out by the roots. You never learn. And what am I? 'And what was she?' The wife of the composer! Ha, ha, ha, ha! Barely presentable.

Anna (*pertly*)

I think that really suits the master's taste!

The Wife

Kindly hold your cheeky tongue!

(*Offended, Anna silently continues with the hair.*)

The Son (*puts his head round the door*)

Mama, shall I wear my hobnailed boots?

The Wife

Certainly, my darling in this snow. (*to Anna*) I don't allow such cheeky behaviour.

Anna

I didn't say anything.

The Wife

But you were pulling such a face. I saw in the mirror.

Housemaid (*hurries in*)

Gnä' Frau, the taxman's here with the forms.

The Wife

I knew it. Five minutes after the master has left here! (*exhausted*) You see now everything that's unpleasant falls on me. He escapes it, plays skat in Vienna. Tell the man I can't pay him; he must send the forms on to my husband.

Housemaid

Yes, gnä' Frau.
(*leaves*)

The Wife

Ha – I quite forgot (*jumps up, jangles the telephone furiously, shrieking*) – I'll ring any way I please; can you give me 178. This is Frau Hofkapellmeister Robert Storch. Good morning. Please, dear Frau Pritek, when are you going to let me have that rosehip compote – of course for cooking with. It makes the only jam that my husband likes. And you know, when he's working so hard, he must have his rosehip jam. So please don't forget it again... (*The Cook enters, standing by the half-open door.*) Thank you so much. If you treat people properly you can twist them round your little finger –

Anna (*nods ironically*)

Of course, gnä' Frau!

Cook

Gnä' Frau, about today's meals?

The Wife (*flaring up*)

How often must I tell you to come right into the room and don't hang about in the doorway.

(*Anna finishes the hair.*)

Cook

What shall I cook today?

The Wife (*furiously*)

Whatever you want to, you know what to do! You see now how everything falls on me – and it's simply not right that you should annoy me further.

(*Cook leaves.*)

Anna (*excusing her*)

Really, gnä' Frau, really –

The Wife

I told you to keep your mouth shut! When my husband leaves me –

Anna

Then why doesn't gnädige Frau go too?

The Wife

You know why: you know I'm needed here, think for yourself, how could I leave here – I, an industrious, faithful, conscientious wife. I'm not one of those unheeding, vain, frivolous housewives thinking all the time of their hats and their pretty dresses, while their houses lie neglected and just grow dirty. 'Oh, my French maid takes care of all that sort of thing', that's what one of them said to me the other day. Can't you see I'm needed to keep my household going; I hardly find the time to have my hair done, or dress myself – and you say that I should now forget my duties, and loll in hotels like a lazy lady? There's no escape for me – everything unpleasant falls on me when my husband leaves me for two whole months!

Anna

I think gnä' Frau is glad to be alone a while?

The Wife

I am always alone, not only when he is travelling, also when he's with me, lost in thinking, (*sighing*) lost in all his music.

Anna

But the master, he is always so kind to the gnädigen Frau.

The Wife (*flaring up*)

That is the least he can do; but the very least! As for other things: sitting quietly beside me,

not working, just talking, that he can't do. He really is... no sort of cavalier.

Anna

Gnä' Frau would not really like such a husband!
Gnä' Frau is not really angry with the master.

The Wife (*fiercely*)

He makes me so furious.

Anna

Surely there's no man more kind or more thoughtful!

The Wife (*eager and childlike*)

His eternal kindness and thoughtfulness, they're just the things that drive me mad, so mad. If he'd only rage and storm and perhaps strike me, as a real husband should – but his eternal 'kindness and thoughtfulness' and besides his self-contained, unbearable superiority, and the calm lofty way he treats me.

Anna

Oh no, surely not –

The Wife

Yes, yes, I know that he despises all womankind, for he thinks that we women are stupid, idle, vain, uneducated halfwits.

Anna

Gnä' Frau, I know the master relies so often on your judgement –

The Wife

Oh yes, only up to a certain point, though –

Anna

He often asks for your advice!

The Wife

Yes, (*eagerly*) that's 'cos he knows well I'm far more practical than he.

Anna

He too is extremely practical!

The Wife

He is sly! Has a peasant cunning that I lay no claim to. I come right out with what I'm feeling, he's so crafty, he can control himself, conceal things! That only makes me still angrier, I cannot find the words when I want them, and that's why we have terrible quarrels.

Anna

The master knows what lies behind them, that gnä' Frau loves him –

The Wife

Yes, but it's no way to win an argument (*sighing*) – for I put myself in the wrong. All he wants is a quiet life, so he lets me have my way

and I, I, always, I become a monster! Ah, Anna, I am so unhappy!

Anna

Gnädige Frau, you really must be calm!

(*The telephone rings.*)

The Wife (*rises slowly and answers the telephone with a sad voice*)

Hallo. Who is it? (*suddenly very bright*)

[4] Oh! Frau Huf! Good morning. And how are you? At ten o'clock? At the toboggan run? Oh yes, with pleasure! Ha, ha, ha! Are you coming to fetch me? Oh how very kind. Thank you. Auf Wiedersehen! (*quite transformed and pleased*) Well then, there is a delightful friend, at least she takes the trouble to ring. I hate it so when I'm always the one who telephones to ask people out!

Anna

Many ladies are hesitant, fear to disturb you...

The Wife

Hold your tongue. Most women are lazy, I know them much better! Now I must dress quickly! What shall I wear now? The blue spotted one? No the yellow is better. Maybe not! Wait! Anna! Anna!

Change of Scene. Orchestral Interlude

Scene 2

At the toboggan run. One toboggan after another comes down and disappears into the wings. Baron Lummer enters on skis. A voice is heard shouting 'Make way. Look out!' and another tobogganer speeds past. The Baron tries quickly to cross the toboggan run but the Wife follows on too quickly with her sledge and, coming round the corner out of control, calls out but collides with the Baron. As the snow settles, she yells.

The Wife

[6] You blockhead! Can't you see, this is a toboggan run?

Baron Lummer

Yes, all the same, you were too quick!

The Wife

No! You too slow, sir! And now I am badly bruised and hurt.

Baron Lummer

I am terribly sorry dear Fräulein!

The Wife

My husband would have a thing or two to tell you, if he were here with me!

Baron Lummer

Where have you been hurt then?

The Wife (*tearfully*)

That's not the sort of thing I tell to a stranger.

Baron Lummer

My name is: Baron Lummer.

The Wife (*suddenly friendly*)

Ah! Are you related to the general Baron Lummer who commanded a regiment in Linz, the one whose wife was a von Müller by birth?

Baron Lummer

They are my parents.

The Wife

Ah! Delightful! I am Frau Hofkapellmeister Storch, my husband is the famous composer.

Baron Lummer

Can I help you in any way?

The Wife

Thank you, no: I feel much better; just a little bruising! And what brings you here? How long are you staying?

Baron Lummer

Convalescence, a little sport – three or four weeks.

The Wife

My parents used to know your parents, knew them well, when in Linz Frau von Ref – ha, ha,

ha ha, was the governor's wife, of whom they said 'Let us hope that she commands only her husband' – would you like to visit me?

Baron Lummer

With the greatest of pleasure! Once again, please forgive me!

The Wife

All's well. Only next time try to move slightly faster! Auf Wiedersehen!

Baron Lummer

Yours to command, gnä'ge Frau.
(*He kisses her hand.*)

Change of scene. Orchestral interlude.

[6] *Waltz*

Scene 3

[7] *Ball at the Grundlsee Inn*

The Wife (*comes forward with the Baron and sinks exhausted onto a chair*)

[8] I can't go on! For years I have never danced quite so wildly as tonight. Anyway, the air is so stifling! Not good for you, not good for your migraine.

Baron Lummer

Well just tonight, only!

The Wife

If you are here for your health sir, you must be very careful!

Baron Lummer

Well, tomorrow I'll really start.

The Wife

Good, under my direction! My husband tells me I'm the best doctor he knows. And you must have many things to tell me about your life and your family!

Baron Lummer

Yes, tomorrow, if you'll allow me! But I'm afraid that the waltz may soon be ending. Shall we join them? Gnädige Frau dances light as a feather!

The Wife

And would you believe it: my husband would never dance for he tells me dancing makes him dizzy. But I love to dance!

Baron Lummer

You dance divinely!

(They mingle with the dancers again. Change of Scene. End of the Waltz)

Scene 4

Furnished room in the house of the Notary

The Wife (*enters quickly with the Notary's wife*)

[9] As you know my husband who is always hard at work, who's always so industrious – never fails to tell me: if you find an ideal companion to go walking with, or skiing – and this Baron Lummer is the son of some friends who knew my parents in Linz years ago! And so this is the lodging? Very nice too: exactly what's needed for my young companion. Fancy now the poor young man cannot even start his studies, suffers from migraine – but in this invigorating climate! And such opposition from his family! He has natural talent for nature study. The desk should stand beneath the light: my young Herr Baron must from time to time do a little work despite his migraine. (*adjusts the desk*) But, haven't you an armchair?

The Notary's Wife

My husband's chair, the one he likes...

The Wife

That's just the thing! Therese, go down and bring it here at once. The bed can stay, far from the window – for as you know with a migraine one must sleep with the windows open!

The Notary's Wife

At his age?!

The Wife

Twenty-two, I believe!

The Notary's Wife
So young? And he suffers from migraine!

The Wife
Hereditary, it seems.

The Notary's Wife
Who'd believe it!

The Wife
His uncle died in madness! Therese! These drawers must be thoroughly wiped with a damp duster!

The Notary's Wife
Everything is clean, I assure you!

The Wife (*formally*)
Forgive me please, I must insist on it; you've no idea how dirty it gets here with the tourists, and central heating – I know from seeing my own window sills! Can you give him breakfast?

The Notary's Wife
Of course.

The Wife
Perhaps from time to time, some cold supper too? He mustn't go out every evening! You know how young people soon adopt indolent habits. Well then, très bien! I will pay you by the week. My husband gives me plein pouvoir. Well, all's arranged and I will send my protégé.

And take good care of him. Air the room well before you heat it! And I'll come back here to inspect. Remember me to your husband!

The Notary's Wife
Yes of course, I'll see everything is just as you want.

The Wife (*to Therese*)
Wipe the drawers with a damp duster: that is all important for keeping well. I understand these things. My husband tells me: a doctor is what I should have been. And look at him – always well. Adieu! Auf Wiedersehen.

[10] *Change of scene. Orchestral interlude*

Scene 5
The dining room in the Storchs' house. The Wife sits by the lamp and re-reads a nearly-finished letter to her Husband.

The Wife
[11] 'He really is a very nice person, and exceedingly shy. Because of his severe migraines he must have a holiday before he begins his studies in earnest. And so he is free all day. He shares my passion for sport, for brisk walks, and for fresh air, and so he makes an ideal companion for your sad, neglected, lonely wife.' That's well put, that's what I shall tell him! 'Your sad neglected, lonely wife.' What can

he object to in that? Well, he might object to 'lonely' if he knew that I've invited the Baron to dine here – more than once. 'The other day we went to a delightful dance at the Grundlsee Hotel. Only it was horribly stuffy there. The Baron isn't well off, and his family takes no interest in his intellectual pursuits; and so I promised him that you would do something for him. You will, won't you? He deserves it, for having made himself so agreeable to me. I must close for today. Keep healthy; don't smoke too much; don't work too hard. The child is well.' I think that's nicely put. After all how could I not tell him? And I'm certain he'll understand it. He really can't expect me to bore myself to death with moping... I've found at last a young and lively friend – these antique creatures that Robert brings to the house, they think that a woman is nothing but a plaything. And whoever comes to call on my account! They come to see the famous man! Then they are frozen still with respect for him! Dreadful! I need a friend of my sort, fond of talking, fond of walking! If he doesn't like it, I'll simply have to show him who is master in the house! 'His better half' – that's what the famous critic called me once, the one who cannot bear his works – that really made him angry. Ha, ha, ha, ha! (*The Cook enters.*) Fanny, what do you want?

The Cook
The books, gnä' Frau!

The Wife
Shut the door, Fanny.

The Cook
What about tomorrow's menu?

The Wife
You can choose it, what are we having this evening? The Baron's coming.

The Cook
Again?

The Wife
I forbid your cheeky comments! I don't know if he's staying on for dinner, but prepare something in case he does.

The Cook
I already have.

Marie (*announcing*)
Baron Lummer.

The Wife
Oh good! Show him in.

(*Baron Lummer enters.*)

The Wife
How are you? Forgive me please. You find me deep in my labours (*sighing*) – my house accounts. Do you mind if I...

Baron Lummer

Please continue, gnädige Frau – may I help you?

The Wife

How delightful! Intellectual labour is so tiring – a friendly word or two of advice can help, and smooth one's task: writing and bookkeeping – the hardest work of all. I detest adding up figures. (*counting*) Six and four –

Baron Lummer

Ten –

The Wife

And ten and nine make nineteen and eight makes –

Baron Lummer

Twenty-seven –

The Wife

And ten makes –

Baron Lummer

Thirty-seven –

The Wife

Thirty-seven, that's three to carry, three and nine are twelve, and nine... and nine... well what are twelve and nine?

Baron Lummer

Twenty-one.

The Wife

Yes. Thank you. Well that is that, I'm glad it's over. How are things with you? Will you stay to dine?

Baron Lummer

No thank you kindly. I said that I would meet a companion.

The Wife

Companion? We know what that means.

Baron Lummer

Oh, but I beg you! No really, gnädige Frau!

The Wife

No need to tell me! I'm not one who pries into things that don't concern me. And what did you do today?

Baron Lummer

Nothing much.

The Wife (*maliciously*)

Just as usual!

Baron Lummer

A little skiing – and then toboggoning...

The Wife

I hope you are content with your lodgings?

Baron Lummer

They're wonderful. Just ideal!

The Wife

¹² Would you mind if just for a moment I read the paper; I've worked so hard today I've found no time to do so... Would you like a page?

Baron Lummer

Thank you!

(*They both read the newspaper.*)

The Wife

Would you believe it? Frau von Hupp is getting a divorce. He's carrying on with an actress. Shocking! Don't you think that the time has come to begin your work in earnest?

Baron Lummer

Ah, that's just the problem –

The Wife

Your brother, did you say, refuses to help? (*The Baron shakes his head.*) But he could if he chose?

Baron Lummer

He could if he chose, but he insists I become a lawyer.

The Wife

What a good idea.

Baron Lummer

How can you say that gnädige Frau. What could be more boring!

The Wife

Heavens, in my view all that's important is that you should work!

Baron Lummer (*decisively*)

No, those dusty legal volumes bore me!

(*Marie enters.*)

The Wife

Marie, has Bubi finished his piano practice?

Marie

I think so, gnä' Frau.

The Wife

Then he must have his bath at once, and be got ready for bed before dinner.

(*Marie leaves - the Wife busies herself at the desk, then picks up the newspaper again.*)

Baron Lummer

May I dare venture... I'd like to offer a small suggestion... (*The Wife reads busily without listening.*) And ask you just a tiny favour.

The Wife

A what?

Baron Lummer

An enormous favour –

The Wife

From me? (*keeps looking at the paper*)

Baron Lummer

Since you are so friendly and take an interest in my future –

The Wife (*eagerly*)

Well, what is it?

Baron Lummer

I find my life so hard, I have only one ambition, to spend my life in nature-study!

The Wife

Well that's a pleasant life: voyages to Africa, China, Spain, East Anglia, Australia... Not my sort of thing! But an uncle of mine was in Alaska, only I think that you must have lots of money.

Baron Lummer

Yes, alas!

The Wife

Do you have enough to pay your way at the university? Forgive me if I'm being indiscreet!

Baron Lummer

Not even that.

The Wife

Well then, I don't see how you can (*goes back to the newspaper*) –

13

Ha, Captain Sturz has resigned his commission – reasons of health – one knows what that means; disreputable reasons. He was an escort of mine, a charming lieutenant – later he became a boor – serves him right! What were you saying just now?

Baron Lummer

That alas the money for my chosen study is lacking.

The Wife

Well, I've no idea what you should do.

Baron Lummer

But there are scholarships; and there is, so to speak, patronage.

The Wife

Scholarships; you must find a way to get one.

Baron Lummer

I fear that I may not know the right people.

The Wife

But as for patronage, perhaps my husband could assist!

Baron Lummer

You think that he might help me?

The Wife (*enthusiastically*)

Yes, that's what we'll do! I've written a letter and told him all about you – he's often helped friends before. You've no idea how good he is: he's from a most eminent family, nobly born and bred, knows all the right people – and practical as well, he always knows the right way to do things. They often say that men of genius are inexperienced and useless in worldly matters – that's far from true: when I am quite at a loss, and lose my head, he knows the answer, straightaway sets me right. Oh my husband is tender and kind – it often doesn't show – at times he seems unfriendly – and so he's misunderstood – not as artist: he has no complaints on that score – his career is so glorious, honours heaped upon him, success on success, – and yet he is not conceited, no, honestly he's modest, yes truly he's modest: at home he never talks of himself, or of his music – and he's always so busy, too busy! And that's indeed my worry; he sometimes neglects me, not through lack of love for me, but because he's deep in thinking, his head filled with projects – he's a remarkable man! You've never met my husband?

Baron Lummer (*cheekily*)

I'm more than content to have made the acquaintance of his charming wife.

The Wife

Fie, Baron, speak of my husband with more respect! If there is anyone who can help you he's the one!

Baron Lummer

D'you think so, gnädige Frau? (*pathetically*) But your husband doesn't even know me.

The Wife

Ah, but I know you and know your worth – that's enough. You are my delightful companion, and truly I... feel a 'sympathie' for you.

Baron Lummer

Yes, only –

The Wife (*impatiently*)

What 'only'? (*emphatically*) I do assure you: my husband is the kindest man in the world. Would you believe it, my husband has never, no never refused me what I ask? Now and then we have disagreements, we are not always of the same opinion, but it's not serious: a little spice makes our life more piquant – finally he always will admit: I am right. And he'll give way although at times I may not be right – he's so good-hearted! In short, he always does just what I ask.

Baron Lummer

Yes, I only wish –

The Wife

What?

Baron Lummer

I only wish –

The Wife

Wish what? Out with it! What makes you so tongue-tied today? Tempo, tempo as my husband says, tempo in all things!

Baron Lummer (*decisively*)

I'd wish you'd not delay things till your husband's back –

The Wife

Why not? I'd never act till I'm sure that he approves!

Baron Lummer

But gnädige Frau surely said?

The Wife

Of course, I'm always perfectly free to act as I choose to!

Baron Lummer

In that case I'd much rather –

The Wife (*impatiently*)

Well, what would you much rather...?

Baron Lummer (*boldly*)

¹⁴ I'd rather... Gnädige Frau, it is so hard for me – none of my family understands me – I've never had the good fortune, never encountered someone who cared for me, gnädige Frau, you have already shown me such kindness – the 'sympathie' of a charming lady – Oh, how can I express myself? Already I feel so indebted –

The Wife (*affectionately*)

And so, then we'll continue the best of friends and when he's back then my husband will be your true protector. Ah! I get so lonely; just sitting alone here! You've no idea what it is like.

Baron Lummer

Oh, gnädige Frau, if I...

The Wife (*not listening*)

This dreadful loneliness –

Baron Lummer

If I dared...

The Wife

It's no use having a famous eminent husband. (*naïve and guileless*) I really need an ordinary agreeable man like you!

Baron Lummer

I'd gladly, yes I would – but to return now, that special favour we spoke about?

The Wife

Today I wrote to Robert and told him about you: I wrote most warmly! What a splendid sportsman you were – only not very good at conversation. (*laughing*) Of course I didn't actually write that. And that I have a delightful cavalier. Perhaps he'll even be a shade jealous for once. (*correcting herself*) Oh no, I simply had to let him know that you'd been here! Let us hope you can still be here to meet him when he gets back again!

Baron Lummer

Alas, I can't... I'll have to make other arrangements if you, gnädige Frau –

The Wife

You heard me tell you just now, there's nothing I can do, other than talking, strolling, skiing, skating.

Baron Lummer

Surely you said just now...?

The Wife

What?

Baron Lummer

You wanted us to be the best of friends.

The Wife

Yes we will! Only if you cannot stay for dinner then it is time you left, dearest friend. So, when

shall I see you? Shall we go walking by the Grundlsee?

Baron Lummer

I'd like that!

The Wife

When shall we meet? Ten o'clock? Will you come and fetch me tomorrow, and be, let us hope, rather livelier! You must leave all your troubles behind you! I require cheerful companions at my side – (*The Baron leaves.*) auf Wiedersehen! (*lost in dreaming*)

¹⁵ A charming boy. Both charming and young. Once more I sit here alone – My dearest husband! He is so good, so faithful. Oh, the lonely, long weary evenings here – I grow so mournful... (*brooding deeply*)

Change of Scene. Orchestral interlude

Scene 6

The Baron's room in the Notary's house. Lying on the sofa, the Baron smokes a cigarette.

Baron Lummer (*gets up and calls from the door*)

¹⁶ Frau Notar!

The Notary's Wife (*outside*)

Yes!

Baron Lummer

Would you send my trunk up here please?

The Notary's Wife

You surely don't want to leave us already?

Baron Lummer

I may have to. (*whistles*) And no doubt she thinks that I should spend every evening sitting with her as her companion. 'We know what that means!' (*humming*) 'Theresulein, Theresulein, du bist mein süßes Mädlein!' Ah, well this evening I intend to enjoy myself. Maybe reading papers à deux is the only pastime she knows! God, what a bore! And then she starts again 'when will you begin your studies?' A perfect schoolmarm! And yet, on the other hand she's charming and bright. She believes in my migraine – not so bright! What if I should make a full declaration of love? She is perfectly capable of answering me with a hymn of praise in honour of her dreary old husband. (*whistles*)

(*A young girl dressed for an evening out looks round the door.*)

Resi

Are you ready, love?

Baron Lummer

Good God, what impudence! Off with you at once. What if the Frau Notarin should see you, and tell my generous patroness!

50

Resi

I only looked in, only wanted to see where you lived.

Baron Lummer (*calls after her*)

Give me ten minutes – and I'll be with you. So let me try once more: while we are walking I shall slip my note in her hand: that's when her mood is most melting and sweet. (*sits at the desk*) So, my first and last attempt. (*writes*) 'Most honoured gnädige Frau! Today you were so kind and understanding: I did not care, did not dare tell you in words, all that my beating heart yearned to tell you... Forgive me then, if I try to put into writing...'

Change of Scene. Orchestral interlude

COMPACT DISC TWO

Scene 7

The Wife's dining room. Outside, heavy snowfall

The Wife (*holding the Baron's letter*)

1 A thousand marks is he asking! He's surely gone mad? What does he think? A thousand marks! And what would Robert say? Such a stupid note! Frightened to say it aloud – now I see why he stammered, couldn't get it out! And so it all comes to an end. And I, I really thought – pity. Such stupid fellow! Oh, what a pity. All the same it just won't do.

Baron Lummer (*entering*)

I've taken the liberty –

The Wife

Not like that! First, wipe your feet, if you please. (*Baron exits.*) It's easy to see you're not married. (*Baron re-enters.*) Now for once and for all let me tell you straightaway: what you ask is totally out of the question. Do you want to destroy our friendly relation, on which I placed perhaps too much value? I told you that I felt truly 'sympathie' for you! We'll still be the best of friends, despite it really, it was unkind behaviour acting in that way – my husband when he returns will do all he can to help your studies; I told you that he would help you... My father always said: lending money destroys friendship.

Baron Lummer

I'll pay it back – with interest.

The Wife

Better make it a present and then forget it, that's what Robert says. Couldn't you give lessons – others do it.

Baron Lummer (*emphatically*)

Not while I work hard at my studies – impossible!

The Wife (*drily*)

Well in that case I have no advice. (*Marie brings*

a letter.) From my husband? No, it's for him. Forgive me please. 'Herrn Hofkapellmeister Robert Storch'. Another begging letter? Another hopeful librettist? (*opens it – reads – screams*) What is this?

Baron Lummer (*shocked*)

What has happened?

The Wife

Unspeakable and vile! Ah! Ah!

Baron Lummer

Tell me!

The Wife

No, no! 'My Angel!' Not you! 'Let me have two tickets again for the opera tomorrow. Afterwards in the bar as usual. Your own Mitzi Mayer.' Mitzi Mayer! She's a harlot! 'In the bar as usual'. My husband! Now all is ended! I guessed it long time ago. (*She clasps her head in her hands.*)

Baron Lummer

In heaven's name, gnädige Frau!

The Wife (*stares at the letter as if petrified*)

'My angel' – 'Your own Mitzi Mayer'!

Baron Lummer

Can I help you, in any way assist you?

50

The Wife

No, I thank you Herr Baron. If I need your help, I'll take the liberty of sending for you. *(The Baron leaves, visibly relieved – after a long pause, at the writing desk, filling in a telegram form, writing)* 'You know Mitzi Mayer! Your betrayal discovered! We are parted forever!' *(rings – Anna enters – to Anna)* Take this telegram straight to the post office. Pack the bags at once, all of them.

Anna
But why?

The Wife
We're leaving.

Anna
Today?

The Wife
And forever.

Anna
But gnä' Frau!

The Wife
Not a word more! Just pack the bags! We'll leave as soon as you're ready.

Anna
In heaven's name, what's happened?

The Wife *(beside herself)*

Just get on with it. *(She sinks exhausted into the armchair.)*

Change of Scene. Orchestral interlude

Scene 8

The child's bedroom, lit only by a candle

The Wife *(sitting by the child's bed)*

[2] My darling, darling Bubi! I am so dreadfully unhappy!

The Son
Why are you crying?

The Wife
Your Papa is so dreadfully cruel and evil.

The Son
That's not true! Papa is good.

The Wife
No, no! My poor dear child! That shameful wicked man, betrayed me. So we must leave, we two, all alone.

The Son
But I don't want to leave.

The Wife

You'll come with me and your Papa you'll see no more.

The Son *(begins to howl)*
I don't want to leave Papa!

The Wife

What, you'd stay with that wicked man who's wronged me, who's so bad he has made your dearest mother cry?

The Son
Papa is always good to you. You get angry with Papa. You scold him, behave nastily.

The Wife
Oh, I've been far too good with him! *(She weeps.)* Far more than he deserved! Oh, Bubi! Everything in life is over. Sleep my darling. I'll stay here till you fall asleep, my darling! I'll kneel and pray for you, you wretched forsaken child! O wretched, forsaken wife! *(She kneels praying by the child's bed.)*

The Curtain falls. End of Act I

Act II

Scene 1 – The Skat Game

A comfortable living room in the house of the Commercial Counsellor with good modern pictures and bronzes. Under a large chandelier in the middle of the room is the skat table where the

Legal Counsellor, the Commercial Counsellor, the Opera Singer and Kapellmeister Stroh are playing skat. The Legal Counsellor shuffles the cards and deals.

[3] [Prelude]

Commercial Counsellor

[4] Ah! You don't know his wife, Herr Legal Counsellor! A monster! He is a capital fellow. Only his wife – simply terrible.

Singer
You've got a grudge against his wife.

Commercial Counsellor
I'll say, the way she treats me.

Singer
Nevertheless she's really a capable wife!

Commercial Counsellor
For him perhaps.

Singer
Ha ha. Gucki!

Legal Counsellor
Who leads?

Stroh
I do. Knaves are trumps. Ace. *(as he plays it)*

Legal Counsellor

They say he loves her tremendously.

Commercial Counsellor

You should see the way she treats him. Even in public.

Stroh

In my view, his wife is greatly wronged. She can be temperamental, perhaps too hasty.

Singer (*calls*)

I win. You've got 29, 60 points to me.

Stroh (*continuing*)

A little wild and thoughtless. (*They carry on playing.*) Yet I am certain that she is kind at heart, and she takes good care of him.

Commercial Counsellor

Oh well, she may have her virtues, everyone has. (*to the Legal Counsellor*) You happily have the virtue *not* to know her. Wait till the day you have got to know her better – sleepless nights! I can tell you. 18! 18, Herr Kammersänger!

Singer

Just a moment, I haven't finished counting my cards yet. Pass.

Commercial Counsellor

24.

Legal Counsellor

Your game, sir!

Robert (*enters*)

5 Gentlemen I'm here at last. I'm sorry I'm late, but the rehearsal couldn't be cut shorter.

Singer (*mocking*)

At the start of every season you always have this tremendous urge for long rehearsal, but then when March comes it vanishes.

Robert

Oh well, once in a year. If you singers only paid attention to what I tell you, then for three years it would suffice you.

Stroh

You still can join in, Maestro, you're just in time to play this round.

Singer (*threateningly*)

'Have you said your prayers this evening, Desdemona!'

Stroh (*calls*)

59. Can't you add a king? 59. And no Jacks. This is going to cost you a fortune!

Legal Counsellor (*sarcastic*)

(*to the Opera Singer*) Most finely played! If you'd led your spade then, you'd not have found it so easy to beat us!

Robert (*comfortably*)

My favourite pastime, a game of Skat, the only recreation after music!

Commercial Counsellor (*mocking*)

Especially when the ladies are absent!

Robert (*good humoured*)

Oh well, the ladies: you know I love my wife most dearly, but at Skat it is pleasanter when they are no ladies to disturb us.

Commercial Counsellor

Every now and then the door opens; she pokes her head inside: 'Have the gentlemen not finished?' 'Soon, my Angel' says he, thinking: the Devil take her, or else 'And who is the winner?' a mere excuse for her to come and see if her husband has won, whether he's lost; when they're back at home, watch out!

Robert

Come, it's not that bad. Null ouvert!

Legal Counsellor

Double.

Singer

What, on a null ouvert?

Robert

Redouble. Just look at this! (*shows his cards*)

Commercial Counsellor

By why ever did you double, for heaven's sake!

Legal Counsellor

With two sevens?

Commercial Counsellor

Even then; just look!

Robert

No post-mortems! Just score it. 200 for me! My deal!

Singer

How long are you staying here this time, Maestro?

Robert

Four weeks. Two concerts more as well as the other stuff. (*to the Commercial Counsellor*) Your bid.

Commercial Counsellor

Just one moment, you haven't given me all my cards yet. Ah, thank you. 10!

Singer

No such bid.

Commercial Counsellor

Since when?

Singer

Trump game only. We always play that way here.

Commercial Counsellor

Well, 18 then.

Singer

Pass!

Legal Counsellor

Pass!

Commercial Counsellor

Shame on you, stonewalling! Leaving me with my 18.

Legal Counsellor

Tonight it's the only safe thing to do.

Commercial Counsellor

Two Jacks!

Singer

You see now why we were stonewalling.

Commercial Counsellor

Hearts trumps. You might as well surrender!

Legal Counsellor (*to Robert*)

And how is your wife Frau Christine?

Robert

She's very well. I had a letter from her today. She's found a new friend to amuse her: he's good at sport and they go walking, skiing, skating.

Singer

Watch out then, Maestro!

Robert

Oh no! My wife – but you don't know her.

Commercial Counsellor

Well, I know her well!

Robert

Not really.

Commercial Counsellor

Oho!

Robert

Just because that one time –

Commercial Counsellor

One time? A thousand times now –

Robert

As I freely admit, her behaviour to you was not altogether justified. However, that doesn't mean you know her well.

Commercial Counsellor

I've no desire to know her any better. My nerves are bad enough.

Singer

Are we here for conversation, or to play Skat?

Robert

Sorry. But when he picks on my Christine, of course I must defend her.

Stroh (*to Robert*)

What a stirring example of married life!

Robert

That's the life for me, it suits me well.

Commercial Counsellor

I'm always surprised I've never seen you nervous.

Robert

Heaven be praised! Thanks to training.

Commercial Counsellor

That is something you do not lack.

Stroh

Lucky fellow!

Robert

Since I'm so lucky to have as companion a fiery, fanciful person, one who because of her lack of self-control is often helpless.

Commercial Counsellor

Helpless? That is something I've yet to see.

Robert

Yes, she's often helpless and lost like a child, that has given me nerves of steel. No such thing as neurosis: lack of self-discipline!

Commercial Counsellor

Oh come now, you go too far!

Robert

I stick to it, I believe it!

Singer

No tricks.

Commercial Counsellor

And you yourself provide a fine example. If I had a wife like her I should soon be in a madhouse.

Legal Counsellor

65 to me.

Robert (*to the Commercial Counsellor*)

Thanks to *your* bad play.

Commercial Counsellor

I tell you at the very thought of her I begin to tremble.

Robert (*with warmth*)

All the same, for me she's made a perfect wife. For left to myself I am careless and lazy: my Christine has made me all that I am: she also keeps me healthy! She keeps me clean and dusted.

Commercial Counsellor

That's something she can do: brush you off!

Robert

You must not exaggerate! She's what I need, I need someone who's fiery and lively around me. Everyone's possessed of two natures: the difference is this, there are some who only show their good side, they are fine people who present an agreeable surface. While she, she is really one of those gentle shy and tender creatures, but rough on the outside, I've met with many and they're the best kind! You think she's a hedgehog, all spiny and prickly. (*The serving maid enters and gives Robert a telegram – to the Opera Singer*) Will you play for me please. (*opens the telegram and stares at it speechless*)

Legal Counsellor

What's wrong? I hope it's not serious?
Bad news, Maestro?

Robert

What on earth can this mean?

Legal Counsellor

Will you tell us? From whom?

Robert

Certainly. It's from my wife.

Commercial Counsellor

Pricks from the hedgehog?

Robert

Forgive me, it's not a joke!

Legal Counsellor

But I hope it's not serious?

Robert

I'm speechless! (*to Stroh*) Read it.

Stroh

'You know Mitzi Mayer. Your betrayal discovered. We are parted forever.' No signature.

Robert

That's her way; my wife never signs a cable. Has she gone mad?

Commercial Counsellor

It's not the first time.

Robert

That's quite enough. I said it's no joke. Mitzi Mayer!

Stroh

So you know her too?

Robert

Who is she then?

Stroh

Oh, one of those – so so la la.

Robert

You know her?

Stroh

Slightly.

Robert

Only I happen not to know her.

Stroh

That's what everyone says, when they are caught out.

Robert

That's quite enough, Sir!

Stroh

I'm sorry. I fully understand how awkward it must be when one's wife finds out.

Robert

If only I could fathom what it's all about... (*suddenly calm*) Gentlemen, please excuse me if I leave you now; but I don't feel like playing

any more. Adieu. I must think things over. (*leaves quickly*)

Commercial Counsellor

6 A wretched business! Frau Christine will rant and rave.

Singer

I thank my stars I'm not in his shoes now.

Legal Counsellor

I'd never have thought it of him – no, not of him.

Stroh

That perfect model husband!

Legal Counsellor

Yet I'm sure that he'll escape somehow.

Singer

'If he is weak, weak, all men!'

Commercial Counsellor

Verily, I say to you: that woman is a monster at the best of times, but when war's declared openly oh je, o je! Poor Maestro Storch.

Singer

'For one sin, must my suffering be so hard?'

Stroh

That he's a friend of Mitzi Mayer, that really surprises me, I'd never have guessed!

Legal Counsellor

Well, what say you my friends, shall we play a little, till we recover from the shock?

Commercial Counsellor

Do you not think, that one of us should go with him, maybe keep him company: for I thought he was dreadfully shaken? I'll give him a ring tomorrow then, when he's had time to consider what he should do. (*They get back to the game - Stroh deals.*) 18!

Legal Counsellor

20!

Commercial Counsellor

24!

Legal Counsellor

Pass.

Singer

Pass.

Commercial Counsellor

My game. Clubs are trumps.

Orchestral postlude. Change of scene

60

Scene 2

The Notary's office

The Wife (*enters, solemn and earnest*)
7 Good Day, Herr Notar.

The Notary

Ah, good day, gnädige Frau. (*rises from his desk*)
And what brings me this honour?

The Wife

I need a divorce immediately.

The Notary

Oh, I see?

The Wife

You see – see what?

The Notary

Please forgive me, but my wife said to me –

The Wife

Your wife? How could she know?

The Notary (*embarrassed*)

Well, he lives at our house?

The Wife

Who? My husband?

The Notary

No, no, the Herr Baron!

The Wife

Kindly stop talking nonsense, I don't want to be divorced from the Baron.

The Notary (*drily*)

Of course you don't. But perhaps on his account.

The Wife

You're mad, it seems. On account of my husband!

The Notary

What – you say, on account of your husband?
Then I fear you must find yourself a different lawyer: I respect your husband too well, far too well.

The Wife

Respect him? Ha-ha, you men are a filthy pack of scoundrels, who stick together!

The Notary (*hastily*)

I really must entreat you!

The Wife

I entreat you to hear my case patiently! This is a professional consultation!

The Notary (*half laughing*)

Just so, and for that very reason I as your lawyer ask you not to insult me.

The Wife

When the simple truth is told, you have no cause to feel insulted.

The Notary

So be it (*invites her to sit*): let us begin once more. You say you've come to me to obtain a divorce from your husband?

The Wife

That's what I said.

The Notary

Have you any ground for divorce?

The Wife (*triumphantly holding the letter*)

Have you heard of Mitzi Mayer?

The Notary

Who is she?

The Wife

The ground for divorce.

The Notary

What's that?

The Wife

The ground for divorce. Since that husband you respect so highly has betrayed me. You men are scoundrels – and worthless all!

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The Notary

I beg you to keep to the subject! What leads you to this assumption?

The Wife (*sneering*)

Assumption? Look at what she calls him! 'My angel'.

The Notary

But who is this Mitzi Mayer?

The Wife

I've no wish to know. She's a female, that's enough!

The Notary

But surely you need more evidence.

The Wife

Here is your evidence, I must demand divorce at once! I lay claim to the child. I lay claim to the house, since he is guilty.

The Notary

That still remains to be established.

The Wife

What?

The Notary

Well, can you be certain that the note was really written to your husband?

The Wife

Of course. Here is his address precisely.

The Notary

And a confusion is out of the question?

The Wife

Out of the question! Precisely. Oh, I never have trusted him, I know too well what men are. Do you mean to help me? Yes or no?

The Notary

No, forgive me please, no, not until I've seen your husband – not yet.

The Wife

Then goodbye! And I shall find another lawyer. (*leaves*)

The Notary (*shaking his head*)

Curious, most curious!

[8] *Change of Scene. Orchestral interlude*

Scene 3

In the Prater. A thunderstorm

Robert

[9] This whole business is driving me mad! I've written – I've sent her cables. No reply. At the North pole! And I've never even heard that wretched female's name. I know there must

be some misunderstanding. If I could only discover what it's all about. But like this! If Christine would send me an explanation! The devil take all this female nonsense! If I could get home to see her. But to leave for such a stupid reason, cancel all, leaving things in such confusion: it just won't do.

Stroh (*rushes in*)

Meister! Meister!

Robert (*turns*)

Ah, you're here? What's wrong?

Stroh (*faltering somewhat*)

There's something important I must tell you.

Robert

What?

Stroh

The man to whom Mitzi Mayer addressed that note –

Robert

There was a note then?

Stroh

Yes, only not for you, that note...

Robert

Not for me!

Stroh (*miserable*)

For me!

Robert

You?

Stroh

Only she wrote your address on it.

Robert (*with rising anger*)

Wrote my address on it? Well, that's the end!

Stroh

I've come directly from her, I guessed that something like that occurred. For women never remember a name precisely – she thought that I was the great composer. A misunderstanding –

Robert

Misunderstanding...

Stroh

She tried to find me in the telephone book, but...

Robert

Telephone book...

Stroh

Found, found (*hesitating*) your address there.

Robert (*breaking out in fury*)

Well, all I can say is Meister Stroh, I'm eternally

grateful. God in heaven! You perhaps have played your part too in this confusion?! You really acquiesced in the heat, knew she was mistaken, did not like to speak? If I find something like that Meister Stroh, (*shouting*) ha! Then, Meister Stroh, you'll get to know me! Three sleepless nights, and my wretched wife! While I was close to madness, Oh, my poor good Christine she cursed me, visited our lawyer to divorce me, he wrote to me telling me the news – and I cannot blame her! (*suddenly very energetic*) You, you are the cause of all this wretched business. You, you alone can put things right again.

Stroh

With joy, dear Meister, I'll gladly do whatever you ask, – let me at once send her a cable.

Robert

Do so, but that's not enough, you'll go yourself, go to my wife, bearing incontestable evidence, precise, exact and written evidence of your precious mistress! God above, what a creature!

Stroh

Well, I can't get away just now...

Robert

Sir, will you go or will you not?

Stroh

Well yes, if possible.

Robert

You must go! My patience, by God is at an end! You'll leave this very instant or... or you will learn to know me!

Stroh

I feel so dreadful, I really am sorry to have caused this fuss!

Robert

Thanks to you I spend the three most dreadful days of all my life, sir! So there's something that you can be proud of! Now first we'll send a telegram, then into the train! Then everything else we'll leave till later. I'll see to your leave of absence. Go, go, go! God be thanked! I was close to madness! (*They both leave quickly.*)

^[10] *Orchestral postlude. Change of Scene*

Scene 4

The Wife's dressing room in great disorder, open wardrobes and drawers which the Wife has been emptying with impatient haste. She storms round the room without purpose while Anna fills a large number of travel cases.

^[11] [Introduction]

The Wife (*sinks exhausted into an armchair*)

^[12] Anna! I shouldn't have sent the Baron off there.

Anna

Off where, gnä' Frau?

The Wife

Well, to see that person in Vienna!

Anna

Oh, but how else could you have made sure if she really knew the master? Gnä' Frau couldn't have gone there herself to ask her; that wouldn't have done.

The Wife

Of course it wouldn't.

Therese (*from outside*)

I can't find the tablecloths.

The Wife

Then open your stupid eyes and look for them.

Therese

They're not here.

Anna

Which tablecloths?

The Wife

The damask tablecloths.

Anna

But gnä' Frau, we sent them off with the luggage in advance!

The Wife

Oh? Therese, never mind, they've been sent, I'd quite forgotten. So stupid and slow, she should have known (*getting angrier*) instead of standing about for hours doing nothing. Don't forget my black button-boots! Empty everything, pack everything, pack all that's mine. A splendid home waiting for him he shall...(*shrieking*) Now do stop getting in my way. My rings! Where are my rings? I had them just now.

Anna (*looking*)

They're not here.

The Wife

Then look for them.

Anna

I *am* looking.

The Wife

I'm sure you've dropped them somewhere.

Anna

I would have noticed.

The Wife (*irritated*)

You never notice anything. (*getting annoyed*) You've been so insolent and lazy these last few days.

Anna

If I'm no use to gnä' Frau then I think that I...

The Wife (*violently*)

Of course, leave me at once, you clumsy quarrelsome thing, trying to annoy me and checking me at every turn. I've never had a maid as rude as you. I knew it: you have all conspired against me, all of you naturally take the master's side. Go at once, I don't need anyone! (*searches again*) Ah! Here are my rings. I put them in my pocket. (*tired*) By the way do you know if the Baron knows how to discover the truth? Would you honestly say that he's clever?

Anna (*weeping*)

Honestly, no.

The Wife

Still it hardly needs a great detective.

Anna

That's true enough.

The Wife

And after all he was eager to go; nothing to pay, since I paid all expenses to Vienna.

Anna

Did madam give him a photograph to take with him?

The Wife

And what would he do with a photograph of me?

Anna

Of the master!

The Wife

Yes – no –

Anna

But how else could he make certain.

The Wife (*understanding*)

I see!

Anna

Whether that person in fact knows the master?

The Wife

Good God, you are right! Only why ever did you not say that before?

Anna

Because Gnädige Frau didn't ask.

The Wife

Surely that ninny –

Anna

Exactly –

The Wife

Might have thought, might have thought to ask me.

Anna

So what will he do?

The Wife

Could I not send my husband a cable? The Baron could take him along with him.

Anna (*horrified*)

Oh no, gnä' Frau!

The Wife

And thus precisely establish his identity?

Anna

Gnädige Frau, you cannot expect the master himself to do that?

The Wife (*erupting*)

Oh, that false shameless betrayer, in cable after cable claims he is guiltless, (*weaker*) until I'm almost tempted to believe it. If it really is true, he should be pleased that his alibi, or whatever one calls the thing, would then be established!

Therese (*enters*)

A telegram, gnädige Frau!

The Wife

Another, that's the tenth, I think, I shan't open any more.

Anna

Perhaps, still...

The Wife

You say that every time. Return unopened!

Anna

Please gnä' Frau, just once again: for I haven't given up hope yet. It might be...

The Wife (*yielding*)

Against my will then; then Schluß! You read it, I refuse to defile my hands with such impurity.

Anna (*reads*)

'Unfortunate confusion with colleague Stroh, who arrives tomorrow with necessary evidence. Your own innocent, most delighted, Robert.'

The Wife (*re-reads the telegram again, a few odd words half-aloud*)

Do you think it might be true? Well, who knows what sort of dirty trick the two might have cooked up between them. He wants to get out of it, so the other takes the blame. Well let's hope the Baron is clever and doesn't get taken in. 'Unfortunate confusion': Stroh – Storch – Do you think it could be possible?

With evidence 'arrives tomorrow,' 'your own innocent'. Anna, do you really want to leave us? 'Most delighted'.

Anna (*still weeping*)
Gnä' Frau says she has no more use for me.

The Wife
You're not stupid, just cheeky!

Therese (*enters*)
Herr Kapellmeister Stroh would like to see you.

The Wife
What! That villain has actually come here?

Anna
He must have taken the night express.

The Wife (*furious*)
I don't want him here. He'll only lie to me. All men are just a pack of deceitful lying scoundrels! (*She paces around in a distracted fashion.*) Tell Master Stroh, tell him to go to the devil.

Anna
What if he is really telling the truth, and can prove it – it's not impossible. Surely gnä' Frau would do better to see him? Then afterwards she can draw her own conclusions?

The Wife
Good. Then let the brute be admitted! But let him wait in the study; I'll join him there.

Change of Scene. Orchestral interlude

Scene 5
The dining room, gaily decorated. Anna busy at the table

[13] [Introduction]

The Wife (*rushes in*)
[14] He's back. Good lord, I'm so excited. Is the breakfast table laid yet? Ah good. Let us hope that the cake's risen nicely! (*calls*) Therese! When does the train get in?

Therese (*from outside*)
It's in.

The Wife
It's in? He'll be here any minute I'll see him!

Therese (*rushes in*)
The Master is here!
(*leaves*)

The Wife (*thinks of going to meet him, then pulls herself together*)
No, no. Why should I go to meet him! Why

should he return in triumph! Why, after my distress and anguish.

Robert (*rushes in*)
Christiner! Christiner! I'm back, dear! (*goes to embrace her but she shrinks back and only offers her hand*)

The Wife (*defensive*)
Just wait a moment. So you think, no doubt, all has been settled?

Robert
Settled completely! God be praised for that. Three horrible days of torment! God how I suffered.

The Wife
You – you have suffered? And what of *my* great anguish, *my* cruel torment, what about them?

Robert
Oh, yes I realised, you were simply furious!

The Wife
Furious? I was scarcely furious. I only felt that all was ended; but furious? To be furious with you, I'd not do you that honour.

Robert (*ignoring her comment*)
Now it is all forgotten and over, and here you have what you thought you'd lost: your faithless husband! Well, Christine? What's wrong then?

The Wife (*emphatic*)
You seem to have taken it all rather too lightly.

Robert
Huh – for three whole days in earnest. But since now our tragic drama has suddenly ended and turned to farce –

The Wife (*comically serious*)
I do not find it comical at all.

Robert
Oh come now –

The Wife (*even more solemn*)
So give me some time to recover quietly and come to terms with my bitter disillusion.

Robert
Do you expect me to beg forgiveness?

The Wife
Forgiveness? What I have suffered cannot be dismissed by a word.

Robert
You're not saying the fault was mine!

The Wife
Maybe my fault?

Robert
Precisely. Your ridiculous, impetuous temper –

The Wife

Mine? Now you've gone too far!

Robert

Not my fault at all!

The Wife

Then whose?

Robert

You know that I am free from blame.

The Wife

I'm not so sure.

Robert

But that evidence surely sufficed?

The Wife

For this one particular case perhaps... only one never knows...

Robert

You damn well should know!

The Wife

I do not know! But now at last I've learnt just what sort of thing can happen!

Robert (*happily*)

Only nothing really did.

The Wife

All my suffering. All my grief and sadness –

Robert

You could have spared all your suffering, all your sadness, if you'd been sensible and asked me how matters stood instead of sending me those two ridiculous incomprehensible quite unanswerable cables, which almost drove me to madness. You asked our lawyer to divorce you?

The Wife

You knew?

Robert

He sent me a cable himself.

The Wife

Disgraceful. That was most unprofessional conduct! Lawyer indeed!

Robert

Yes, he held a higher opinion of me than my own, loving wife.

The Wife (*furious*)

You're all birds of a feather, all stick together!

Robert (*gradually getting angrier*)

Well, this is really too much! When I like a kind good-natured idiot return here, quite ready to forgive you –

The Wife

You me?

Robert

I you, of course: instead of imploring my pardon, you make this stupid scene, when you should beg forgiveness.

The Wife (*scornful*)

Forgiveness? All that I regret is the fact that I ever married you, and that I ever married at all!

Robert

For God's sake! The whole affair has gone much too far!

The Wife

Yes, much too far. So now we must be divorced in earnest! So go at once and ask your friend the lawyer to arrange our divorce quickly!

Robert (*furious*)

I've had enough! You can do that yourself! God in heaven! I'm thoroughly tired of this absurd comedy!
(*leaves swiftly*)

The Wife (*rather surprised by his angry outburst*)

I always knew that one day it would end like this! Rather now than later!

Scene 6

Baron Lummer (*enters quickly*)

15 I'm back now, gnädige Frau!

The Wife (*very cool*)

Oh? And what have you found to tell me?

Baron Lummer

Not much. I didn't have a photograph of your husband.

The Wife

That was so. That's something you forgot, Sir. All the same you could have bought one in any bookshop.

Baron Lummer

Oh, why didn't I think of that!

The Wife

Well then –

Baron Lummer

Well then I called on the lady!

The Wife

Lady?

Baron Lummer

Oh well, whatever you wish to call her... she knows Herr Hofkapellmeister Storch quite well.

The Wife

So she knows him? Who'd believe it! I know that too.

Baron Lummer (*bewildered*)
You know that?

The Wife

Yes, only you do not know if this Herr Hofkapellmeister Storch is really my husband!

Baron Lummer
What... Are there two?

The Wife
Yes, there are two...

Baron Lummer
There's another –

The Wife
There's another – But he is called Stroh!

Baron Lummer
A misunderstanding? And Stroh?

The Wife (*nods proudly*)
Stroh was the one who caused all the fuss.

Baron Lummer (*stupidly*)
Ah, now I see it!

The Wife

At last you see it, Herr Baron? All the same I have to thank you for trying to help me: (*pointedly*) though it hardly seems to me that your proper role in life is the great detective. But all is resolved, yes, all is quite explained now.

Baron Lummer
Quite explained? I see.

The Wife
And my husband's back, (*The Baron flinches.*) he must have caught the same train as you did.

Baron Lummer
Your husband's back?

The Wife
Perhaps you'll return at a more convenient moment? And when you come then you can meet my husband, who as I can assure you now, is completely free from all blame, as I knew from the start, as I never for one moment doubted.

Baron Lummer
Yes, yes, then I'd better take my leave now.

The Wife
Auf Wiedersehen, my dearest Herr Baron!

(*Baron leaves with a fleeting kiss of her hand.*)

Robert (*entering*)

16 Who on earth was that?

The Wife (*rather embarrassed*)
That, that was the young Herr Baron, about whom I wrote...

Robert (*drily*)
I see. The lawyer also wrote me about him; in fact he was the main reason for my return.

The Wife (*hastily*)
You didn't think?

Robert
No, only I did think that it's not a good idea that my wife should be left alone, at any rate not for too long.

The Wife
That is shameful of you! I give you my word...

Robert
There's no need to. I know my gentle loving wife far too well to need to know more details... But all the same it's not proper that my wife should give cause for village gossip, malicious and idle chatter, and you know just how quickly the gossip spreads among your friends.

The Wife
I'm certain, I always was...

Robert
You are!

The Wife
You know that I never...

Robert
Never.

The Wife
I assure you, you know I'll always –

Robert
Always! Let there be peace between us, peace for evermore.

The Wife
Were you very angry with me?

Robert
I certainly was, and you?

The Wife
Everything meaningless, and ended.

Robert
But did you imagine parting, think of what your life alone would be?

The Wife
Well, actually no. I was far too furious with you.

Robert
As for me, I thought of that three whole days,

imagined bachelor life as once I knew it, and pictured to myself my lonely days without you. And who would have kept our child then?

The Wife
I would keep it.

Robert
And the villa?

The Wife
I would keep it.

Robert
There wouldn't have been very much over for me then?

The Wife
No, since the guilty party was you!

Robert (*casually*)
And that handsome youthful, lively nobleman?

The Wife
I beg of you, in this peaceful solemn moment of reunion, don't speak of him.

Robert
Yes, I'll speak of him! He must have been nice?

The Wife
Oh God! Harmless, obliging... (*stops*)

Robert
He was always free!

The Wife
All the time.

Robert
Excelled in every branch of sport?

The Wife
Yes.

Robert
Well born? Distinguished? Lively in conversation?

The Wife
Well, truthfully no – he was a shade boring.

Robert
And you felt 'sympathie' for him?

The Wife
Yes – a little 'sympathie' till – till –

Robert
Till – ?

The Wife
Till he asked me for a thousand marks.

Robert
What? Ha, ha, ha ha. I must say... little Christinchen, that must have been a blow!

The Wife (*bashful*)
[17] Yet I'm certain that he's no criminal, but just a shade thoughtless and naïve – as soon as he asked, I refused him.

Robert
In that case no harm was done! Since this young man proved kind – you're sure he was?

The Wife (*more boldly*)
Most kind and always amiable, till...

Robert
Ah yes, till... Well then, hear me: since he treated my dearest wife kindly I'll take care of him and help him, in any way which you may ask me, I will support him...

The Wife (*whining*)
That's not what I want.

Robert
Well, I'll say no more – We can talk of that affair later on. So he was amiable, you say? That means you had no serious quarrels?

The Wife
No, for quarrelling he was not very gifted, he was far too shy and bashful...

Robert
Bashful? What?

The Wife
Yes – he was rather bashful – truly!

Robert
What? For quarrelling you would say no doubt a husband's needed?

The Wife
Oh yes, you need someone you know well, or where's your subject? You have no common ground: and then you see, there's no fun!

Robert
But for such fun I can do without.

The Wife
But you must not expect that I'll always share your views. I'd lose all my pride, and my self-respect.

Robert
That's something you'll always keep as your dearest treasure! I'll be content if you choose to pick your squabbles on points that don't harm us, now and then...

The Wife (*collapsing*)
I promise I'll never contradict you – I will honour you in all things, do all that you tell me, all that you ask me! Today I realise at last

how dreadful life would be without you, if I should lose you, I'd die, for there would be nothing left to live for. Ah, I learnt to know that only today! When you were wild with me I was shaken deep inside, overwhelmed, ah! You were fine when you first showed your rage.

Robert

Oh come, don't exaggerate again now!

(They embrace.)

The Wife

You are my handsome, faithful marvellous man! I love you alone for ever and ever –

Robert

Once more to hear those words so tender, gladly I'd endure far worse sufferings than you caused me!

The Wife

Forgive me for all things!

Robert

For nothing! I felt so very sad for you!

The Wife

Yes, my dearest Robert, is ours not what you'd call a perfect marriage?

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SOLOISTS/SÖDERSTRÖM/LPO/Pritchard

CHAN 3174(2)

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Richard Strauss (1864 – 1949)

Intermezzo

A bourgeois comedy with symphonic interludes in two acts
Libretto by the composer
English translation by Andrew Porter

Recorded live
at Glyndebourne
13 July 1974

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Christine
Robert Storch, her husband, a conductor
Anna, their maid
Franzl, their eight-year-old son
Baron Lummer
The Notary
His wife
Stroh, another conductor
Robert's Skat partners { A Commercial Counsellor
A Legal Counsellor
A Singer
Resi, a young girl

Elisabeth Söderström *soprano*
Marco Bakker *baritone*
Elizabeth Gale *soprano*
Richard Allfrey *spoken*
Alexander Oliver *tenor*
Thomas Lawlor *bass-baritone*
Rae Woodland *soprano*
Anthony Rolfe Johnson *tenor*
Donald Bell *baritone*
Brian Donlan *baritone*
Dennis Wicks *bass*
Cynthia Buchan *soprano*

Glyndebourne Festival Opera
London Philharmonic Orchestra
Sir John Pritchard

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STRAUSS: INTERMEZZO

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