

Cedille Records
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**Gian
Carlo
Menotti**

**The
Medium**

JOYCE CASTLE

PATRICE MICHAELS BEDI

CHICAGO OPERA THEATER

LAWRENCE RAPCHAK, CONDUCTOR

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Gian Carlo Menotti's *The Medium*

Notes by Andrea Lamoreaux

Despite its eerie setting and gruesome conclusion, THE MEDIUM is actually a play of ideas. It describes the tragedy of a woman caught between two worlds, a world of reality which she cannot wholly comprehend, and a supernatural world in which she cannot believe.

— Gian Carlo Menotti

In the 1990 movie *GHOST*, the main character is killed in a mugging. Dead at the feet of his girlfriend, he enters into existence as a ghost: able to move about the streets, and to see and touch his beloved fiancée. She, however, cannot see him, or respond to his caresses, or hear his voice. Desperate to communicate, he visits a psychic, a woman who claims she can contact the spirits of the dead. Upon meeting a true ghost, she nearly has a nervous breakdown; instead of manipulating living clients into seeing ghosts that aren't there, she now finds herself persuaded to convey urgent messages from a real ghost who is manipulating *her*. The psychic's successful transformation from con to conduit is, arguably, the most absorbing and memorable aspect of the film.

But for Madame Flora, the fake psychic who headlines Menotti's opera, an encounter with a perceived supernatural force leads to disaster. Her fear of the unknown and helplessness upon experiencing something she has not planned and cannot understand, causes her whole world to spin out of control.

The more arcane language of seances, in which people try to communicate with the dead through the aid of a medium or intermediary, gives special meaning to the word "control": a medium is more psychically articulate than others, allegedly able to bring forward the spirits of dead loved ones. Madame Flora's seances do not literally posit this kind of controlling spirit, but for her, control is still everything. She has two accomplices in her profession of deception: her daughter, Monica, whose job is to fake ghostly apparitions and voices, and Toby, a mute boy who stages supernatural effects for atmosphere. She believes she has the two young people totally under her thumb, that they will do anything she tells them, being merely living stage props for the con.

And she has control not only over her crew, but also over her clients — who are so grief-stricken over the loss of people they love, that they will believe anything. They both want and need to believe in Madame Flora.

Then, in the midst of a routine evening, just another seance — looking forward, perhaps, to laughing at the fools once they pay their money and depart — Madame Flora feels the touch of a cold hand on her throat. She is terrified. Her clients are within sight, motionless, mesmerized; Monica is off in a corner, imitating a ghost; Toby is behind a curtain. Yet someone or something has touched her. She is no longer in

control, and she is transformed from a purveyor of the inexplicable into a relentless seeker after an explanation.

Menotti himself analyzed the disintegration of Baba, as her daughter calls her, in these words:

"[She] has no scruples in cheating her clients...until something happens which she herself has not prepared. This insignificant incident, which she is not able to explain, shatters her self-assurance and drives her almost insane with fear. From this moment on, she rages impotently against her still credulous clients, who are serene in their naive and unshakable faith, and against Toby...who seems to hide within his silence the answer to her unanswerable question...Monica, in the simplicity of her love both for Toby and Baba, tries to mediate between them. But Baba, in her anxiety and insecurity, is finally driven to kill Toby, 'the ghost,' the symbol of her metaphysical anguish, who will always haunt her with the riddle of his immutable silence."

Toby, of course, can neither deny nor confess any mischievous interference with the events of the staged seance. He cannot speak in his own defense. Monica is helpless to defend him or to comfort Baba, whose fear she does not understand, and Baba is helpless to overcome her terror and guilt. Obsessed with regaining control over her increasingly chaotic world, she destroys all by a murder that gives no answer at all

except Toby's dead body, with a mouth that spoke no words this side of the grave, and will never speak from beyond it either.

Menotti wrote both the words and the music for *The Medium*. Here he describes its genesis:

"Although the opera was not composed until 1945, the idea... first occurred to me in 1936 in the little Austrian town of St. Wolfgang near Salzburg. I had been invited by my neighbors to attend a seance in their house. I readily accepted their invitation but, I must confess, with my tongue in my cheek. However, as the seance unfolded, I began to be somewhat troubled. Although I was unaware of anything unusual, it gradually became clear to me that my hosts, in their pathetic desire to believe, actually saw and heard their dead daughter, Doodly (a name which I retained in the opera). It was I, not they, who felt cheated. The creative power of their faith and conviction *made me examine my own cynicism and led me to wonder at the multiple texture of reality.*" (Emphasis added)

Baba, unlike Menotti, cannot confront her cynicism, and is incapable of contemplating the "multiple texture of reality". She reacts to the phantom touch with panicky fear, which bewilders her three clients: Mr. and Mrs. Gobineau, who attend the seances to hear the happy laughter of their son Mickey, who drowned accidentally at the age of two, and Mrs. Nolan, a newcomer

who wants to contact her daughter.

After the clients have been sent away, Baba panics again, with a sudden, almost comic attack of conscience: "we must give their money back." She derives some comfort from Monica, who sings a sad ballad called "The Black Swan"; its slow rhythms and mournful tune, its focus on death, seem somehow to calm her, and the song ends as a duet.

But the calm does not last long, for while Monica is still singing, Baba seems to hear ghostly laughter and the voice of a young girl. In terror, the medium turns to prayer — perhaps for the first time in a long while — yet over her voice reciting the "Ave Maria" we still hear, as she does, the faint laughter.

In the staged seances, of course, it is Monica who produces the otherworldly voices — but now? Is it her imagination, or a trick, or is there something there?

An opera takes shape through its music, its plot, its characterizations, and finally, its stage setting: scenery, costumes, props, lighting, and the actions of the performers while they are singing. Though the music of an opera conveys a good deal of its drama — and while some opera-lovers claim to care only about the singing — it is inevitable that some of the impact of the whole operatic creation is lost on a recording. It is left to our imagination to re-create Baba's shabby flat, her gypsy-colored clothing, the haunted and eager faces of the clients, the white robes that turn Monica into

a floating spirit.

To aid the imagination and to enhance the sense of true music theatre, this recording of *The Medium* has added sound effects to highlight some of its important events. Producer James Ginsburg says: "I conceived this recording as a kind of radio play, a performance in which our ears are the sole receptors of impressions that in an actual theatre would come through both ears and eyes. Sound effects are used in radio plays, and they have been similarly used in this production of *The Medium*. After the music was recorded, effects were added, to emphasize events, gestures, and emotions, and to help create an atmosphere of dramatic immediacy."

SYNOPSIS OF THE OPERA

The short overture to Act One creates an instant sense of foreboding; the first vocal music, "Where are my new golden spindle and thread," gives us an immediate clue to the character of the singer, Monica. Her music is almost always simple and folklike, and shows a romantic, fairy-tale imagination utterly at odds with the cynical use her mother makes of her.

The young people play games together instead of preparing for the evening's seance, but in the music we hear the sudden slamming of the door. Baba appears, angry that nothing is ready and that Toby has been costuming himself in her clothes. She has been out to collect money from a former client, and triumphantly slaps it down on the room's big table to announce

her success.

The seance preparations, now quickly made, include thin wires attached to the table, which Toby surreptitiously pulls from behind the curtain of a puppet theatre. Monica wears the ghostly veils. She and Toby are hidden by the time the shrill call of the doorbell announces the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Gobineau and Mrs. Nolan.

The Gobineaus reassure Mrs. Nolan that they have never failed to hear the voice of their Mickey. As the lights are lowered and the seance begins, Baba begins to moan eerily, and Monica becomes visible in the corner: "Mother, mother, are you there?". Mrs. Nolan believes this is her dear Doodly, and Monica sings to her about putting away her grief; she is happy where she is, only her mother's sadness makes her sad too. Once again, the musical style for Monica is simple and gentle, even though she is expressing more complex emotions in this aria.

Mr. Gobineau now begs for his son, and faint childish laughter is heard. The illusion is complete, when suddenly Baba screams: she has felt the touch of a cold hand, and now nothing can be the same for her.

Stamping and shouting, Baba insists that the clients leave, and we hear the door once again as they depart in bewilderment and distress. Baba is hysterical; with a violent gesture she pulls back the curtain of the puppet theatre to accuse Toby of trying to frighten her.

Act One draws toward its close with the "Black Swan" aria and duet; it is almost

the last period of serenity in the opera, as Toby, in spite of Baba's accusations, joins in the performance. He cannot sing, but he plays along with the women softly on a tambourine. The act ends with eerie voices and laughter that only Baba, praying frantically, can hear.

The same ominous chords heard at the beginning of Act One open Act Two. Once again Toby and Monica are alone together; he is entertaining her with a puppet play, characterized by lively woodwind music, and she rewards him with a waltz song that becomes a one-sided love duet. Once again, the music reveals the girl's shining, innocent goodness. As Toby dances for her, and then kneels at her feet, Monica not only tells him of her love, but speaks *for* him, of the love she realizes he feels for her.

The door slams; Baba has returned. She has turned from the conscience-stricken remorse and prayerful pleading at the end of Act One to an old refuge: drink. Monica has fled to her room, and Baba is alone with Toby. In the most lyrical music so far, she reminds the boy how she has cared for him all his life, and promises to reward him if he will just confess that he tried to frighten her with a ghostly touch. The boy makes no sign either to acknowledge or deny, and Baba again becomes violent; the boy's shirt is suddenly ripped from his back, and in final desperation, Baba grabs a whip to beat him. Will she beat him to death? She does not get the chance, because the doorbell shrills again, to announce the return of the Gobineaus and Mrs. Nolan. Baba has for-

gotten there was supposed to be a seance tonight.

Once again we hear money being slapped down on the table; Baba confesses the deception, concluding with, "There is your money." But the clients refuse to believe that they have not seen and heard their beloved dead children, not even when Monica demonstrates Doodly's song and Mickey's laugh. As Mr. Gobineau puts it, "It might well be you thought you were cheating us all the while, but you were not, you were not." They plead for one more seance, but Baba drives them out mercilessly. She also turns once again on Toby, drives him away too, and locks Monica in her room.

Alone, in a drunken, grieving stupor, she recalls the poverty and degradation she witnessed in her youth, but those terrible things never made her afraid; why is she afraid now? Once again she prays, for forgiveness this time, and then falls asleep. Toby now creeps back; he scratches gently on the locked door, but there is no response. He runs behind the couch when Baba knocks over the bottle she had been drinking from, but emerges when he sees

she is still asleep. Tiptoeing behind Baba, he heads for the trunk where he keeps his tambourine; when he accidentally drops the lid, with a loud crash, Baba awakens. Toby hides behind the curtain of the puppet theatre, so Baba sees no one; she must have heard the ghost! In terror, she grabs a gun and shoots at the curtain; with a rip and a crash, his dead body falls forward, and she screams in triumph, "I've killed the ghost!" Monica pounds on the bedroom door, demanding to be released; seeing the bloody scene, she runs away screaming for help.

"As the curtain falls," the composer writes, "Baba kneels over Toby's lifeless body, desperately seeking the truth in his unanswering eyes."

— Andrea Lamoreaux

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THE MEDIUM

Tragedy in Two Acts

Words and Music by Gian Carlo Menotti

THE CAST

MONICA, daughter of Madame Flora Soprano

TOBY, a mute

MADAME FLORA (Baba) Contralto

MRS. GOBINEAU Soprano

MR. GOBINEAU Baritone

MRS. NOLAN Mezzo-Soprano

The action takes place in Madame Flora's parlor in our time. A squalid room in a flat on the outskirts of a great city. A narrow descending stairwell, stage left (leading down to the street). Stage right at the rear, a tall primitive puppet theater, with a white curtain to hide the standing puppeteer. Next to it a small trunk. On the back wall a large astrological chart which will become transparent when light is placed behind it. Downstage right, a door. Upstage left, above the stairwell, a curtained doorway. Downstage left, near the center, an old-fashioned three-legged table. Suspended above it a circular lamp of the Victorian period, which is lighted by means of a string. In a corner a tiny statue of the Virgin, with a rosary hanging from it, and a small votive candle in front of it burning in a red glass jar. Four chairs and a couch. On the wall, near the top of the stairwell, a small buzzer which unlocks the door downstairs. The doorbell which announces the visitors below must be very loud and strident, so as to be clearly heard above the orchestra. No windows. The time of day will be ambiguous throughout the play.

✱ ACT I ✱

(As the curtain rises, Toby is seen kneeling near the open trunk from which he draws out brightly colored pieces of silk and bead necklaces, bangles, etc. With some of these he improvises for himself a fantastic costume. Monica stands near the couch, which is covered by a long white dress and a white veil. She holds a mirror in one hand, combing her loosened hair with the other.)

MONICA

"Where, oh, where

Is my new golden spindle and thread?

If I don't bring them home

The King will strike me dead!"

Thus spoke the weeping queen to the gnome.

"Where, oh, where is my spindle and thread?"

(She suddenly sees Toby in her lifted mirror and turns around.)

Oh! Toby, you foolish boy!

Baba will soon be home and nothing, nothing is ready!

Besides, you know she'll beat you if you touch her things.

(She continues combing her hair.)

"Queen, fair queen,

If you give me the crown on your head,

I'll tell you where I have seen

Your golden spindle and thread."

Thus spoke the wicked gnome.

(suddenly struck by Toby's fantastic attire)

Oh! Toby, how handsome you are!

(playfully)

Behold the King of Babylon

On his purple throne!

I shall be your servant,

I shall be your princess,

I shall be your foreign bride

Come from distant northern seas.

(bowing to each other)

How d'you do, my master,

How d'you do, my King,

How d'you do, my love?

(putting her arms around him; with great feeling)

Ah! Toby, if you only could speak!

(A door slams below.)

Be careful, Baba's coming!

(Frightened, Toby helped by Monica, tries unsuccessfully to free himself from the tangled silks and necklaces, but as soon as Baba appears they both stand frozen. Baba, who has been mounting the steps slowly, on seeing Toby, stops suddenly before reaching the stage level, so that only the upper part of her body will be seen at first.)

BABA

(after a very long silence, freely, very quietly, with sinister calm)

How many times I've told you not to touch my things!

(scornfully after another long silence)

Look at you!

Dressed with silk and bangles like a woman!

Fancying yourself a King or something?

(with sudden anger)

Stop dreaming, you feeble-minded gipsy!

I told you not to touch my things!

(She mounts another step; quietly again.)

Is anything ready? Of course not!

And the people will be here at any minute.

(She mounts another step.)

If anything goes wrong tonight I'll make you pay for it!

(She reaches the stage level; with mounting anger.)

What do you think I'm feeding you for?

You good-for-nothing, you dirty bastard!

MONICA

(restraining her)

No! Baba, don't!

(Baba takes off her coat and hat.)

Where have you been all night?

BABA

Where have I been?

Ah! ah! money, my dear, money.

(throwing a roll of bills on the table)

Look, don't worry, my sweet, you have a very clever mother!

MONICA

Where did you get it?

BABA

Where? I sat on Mrs. Campi's steps all night; She got so scared of seeing me there she paid ev'ry cent she still owed me.

(She breaks into raucous laughter.)

MONICA

You shouldn't have done it.

BABA

Why?

MONICA

Mrs. Campi's so poor.

BABA

Pf! She owed me the money, didn't she?

Get ready! Hurry!

(Baba helps Monica into the white dress, and

then covers her head with the white veil. In the meantime, Toby, after manipulating the lamp and the table runs to the puppet theater, opens the curtain, revealing various levers and cables hidden behind it. He tests some of them, one of which levitates the table, another of which lowers the lamp. The doorbell rings. At a signal from Baba, Monica runs out from stage right. Toby hides in the puppet theater, drawing the white curtain in front of himself. Baba presses the buzzer which opens the latch-door downstairs, then gets a pack of cards and sits in front of the table, pretending to be absorbed in a game of solitaire. Mr. and Mrs. Gobineau, followed by Mrs. Nolan, enter from the stairwell.)

MRS. GOBINEAU

Good evening, Madame Flora.

MR. GOBINEAU

Good evening.

BABA

(hardly looking up from her game)

Come in, come in.

(Mr. and Mrs. Gobineau come into the room. After a brief pause, Mrs. Nolan appears at the top of the stairwell. She hesitates there, looking timidly about the room.)

MRS. NOLAN

(timidly)

Good evening.

BABA

(with more interest, but without getting up)

Good evening. Are you Mrs. Nolan?

MRS. NOLAN

Yes.

(Baba motions her into the room.)

BABA

This is Mister and Mrs. Gobineau.

MR. & MRS. GOBINEAU

How d'you do?

MRS. NOLAN

How d'you do?

BABA

Let us wait a few minutes for late comers.

Sit down.

(Mrs. Nolan and Mrs. Gobineau sit down. Baba goes on with the game. Mr. Gobineau hangs up his coat and hat, then sits near his wife.)

MRS. GOBINEAU

(to Mrs. Nolan, after a long pause)

Is this the first time that you come to Madame Flora?

MRS. NOLAN

Yes.

MR. GOBINEAU

You'll see she's quite wonderful!

MRS. GOBINEAU

(after a pause)

Is there some dear departed you want to speak to?

MRS. NOLAN

Yes, my daughter Doodly.

MRS. GOBINEAU

Oh, when did she die?

MRS. NOLAN

Last year, she was only sixteen.

(with sudden excitement)

Do you really think I shall hear her voice?

MRS. GOBINEAU

Oh, yes, you may even see her.

MRS. NOLAN

Oh, I couldn't bear that!

MR. GOBINEAU

Don't be so nervous. It is all very simple.

(A long pause, during which Baba gets up abruptly and exits. When Mrs. Nolan is quite sure that Baba has closed the door behind her, she leans confidentially toward Mr. Gobineau.)

MRS. NOLAN

Have you known her a long time?

MR. GOBINEAU

Oh, yes! We have been coming here ev'ry week for almost two years.

MRS. GOBINEAU

We come to communicate with our little son.

MRS. NOLAN

(frightened)

And does he speak to you?

MRS. GOBINEAU

(smiling)

Oh, no, he couldn't speak!

He was only a baby when he died.

MR. GOBINEAU

But we hear him laugh.

He sounds so happy.

MRS. NOLAN

When did he die?

MRS. GOBINEAU

(with simplicity)

It happened long ago.

We were still young, very young.

We had a house in France.

With a garden full of lilacs and mimosa.
The garden had a fountain,
A silly little fountain,
No more deep than that . . .
(*sorrowfully*)

It was just his birthday — two years old.
We had given him a little boat, a lovely
little sailboat.

I still don't know how it happened.
He was playing by the fountain.
I was not far away, cutting some lilacs for
the house.

I never heard a sound
(*fighting against tears*)

And when I looked . . .
And when I looked . . .
And when I looked . . .

(*Her voice breaks; she is convulsed in silent
sobbing. Mr. Gobineau
comforts her.*)

MR. GOBINEAU

There, there, don't cry.
You know that he is happier now than if he
had lived.
(*Baba reappears from the left, wearing a
bright colored shawl.*)

BABA

It's time to begin. Close the door.
(*Mrs. Nolan, almost hysterical, springs up
from her chair, dropping her pocketbook. Mrs.
Gobineau picks it up for her, then helps her
to take off her coat and leads her to the table.
Meanwhile, Mr. Gobineau locks all the doors
and helps Baba to place the chairs around
the table. They all sit down, Baba facing the
audience. Mrs. Gobineau shows Mrs. Nolan
how to join hands around the table. With a
last look about her to see that everything is*

*in order, Baba slowly and deliberately pulls
the chain of the overhead lamp. The lights
go out except the little candle in front of the
Madonna. There is a long pause. Noticing
Mrs. Nolan's nervousness, Mr. Gobineau leans
towards her and speaks sotto voce.*)

MR. GOBINEAU

(*freely*)
You must be very silent.
The hands must touch.
(*After a very long silence Baba moans louder
and louder, then suddenly breaks into a long,
anguished scream. Behind the chart hanging
on the wall, Monica slowly appears in a faint
blue light. As Monica's voice is heard, Baba's
moan dies away.*)

MONICA

Mother, mother, are you there?
Mother, mother, are you there?

MR. GOBINEAU

(*excitedly*)
Mrs. Nolan, it must be your daughter . . .

MRS. NOLAN

Oh! oh!

MR. GOBINEAU

Speak to her! Speak to her!
Can't you see! She's looking for you!
Don't be afraid, don't be afraid!

MRS. NOLAN

(*sobbing*)
I . . . I can't!

MRS. GOBINEAU

(*kindly*)
Come, come! You must not behave like that.

MR. GOBINEAU

Ask her something.

MRS. NOLAN

(timidly)

Doodly . . . is it you?

MONICA

(after a pause)

Yes.

MR. GOBINEAU

Go on!

MRS. NOLAN

Doodly, is it evil what I'm doing?

MONICA

(after a pause)

No.

MR. GOBINEAU

You must not be so afraid!

Ask her something else.

MRS. NOLAN

(lovingly)

Doodly, Doodly, are you happy?

MONICA

Yes, mother, I am happy.

MRS. NOLAN

Doodly, Doodly, are you near your father?

MONICA

Yes, mother, I can see him.

MRS. NOLAN

(desperately)

Doodly, Doodly, why did you leave me?

MONICA

Mother! Mother! Are you so unhappy?

MRS. NOLAN

(with shaking voice)

I . . . I'm very much alone.

(She bursts into tears.)

MONICA

(with great tenderness)

Mummy, Mummy dear, you must not cry for me.

I'm still with you.

What is death but a sweeter change,

There's no parting, there's no end.

Mummy, Mummy dear, your sorrow's like a wound that keeps me awake.

The earth is light, the roots are sweet;

But the tears of those we love are heavy and bitter rain.

Mummy, my darling, when you go home,

Go to my room and burn my old gloves.

Burn all my schoolbooks,

Give away my dresses,

Give away my necklace.

Burn, burn, give away, give away,

And promise me never to cry again.

Mummy, Mummy dear, oh, let me sleep in peace,

My night is long.

Forget, forget my grave,

Let the silent grass clothe my bones.

Burn all my shoes,

Give away my bracelets.

Burn, burn, give away, give away.

Keep for yourself only the little gold locket.

MRS. NOLAN

(bewildered)

The gold locket? Which locket? I have no locket.

MONICA

(begins to disappear little by little)

Mother, mother, are you there?

Mother, mother, are you there?
(dying away)

MRS. NOLAN

I don't understand . . .
Doodly, Doodly, don't go away.
Oh, please stop her!
(almost screaming)
Doodly! Doodly!

(Monica completely disappears. Mrs. Nolan rushes toward the vanishing figure, but Mrs. Gobineau restrains her and leads her back to her chair.)

MRS. GOBINEAU

(spoken)
No! No! You mustn't . . . Sit down!

MR. GOBINEAU

(spoken)
Silence, please!

MRS. GOBINEAU

Yes, dear, yes . . .
I know, I know . . .
But you must keep calm . . .
Come, come, sit down . . .
there!

MRS. NOLAN

(spoken together)
But I must speak to her . . .
I must ask her to explain . . .
Please let me . . .

MR. GOBINEAU

Silence!
You will wake her . . .
Hold on to yourself,
Mrs. Nolan . . .
Silence, silence,
please!

Will you please be
silent!

(Mrs. Nolan continues sobbing for a little while. Baba sighs deeply, making a little moan.)

MR. GOBINEAU

(very simply, almost mechanically)
Send my son to me . . .
Please send my son to me.

(Monica is heard simulating a peal of childish laughter. Their faces suddenly animated with joyful anticipation, the Gobineaus look about them, as if trying to discover the direction of the laughter. Mrs. Nolan seems startled and frightened by the sound.)

(spoken)

Is that you, Mickey?
Hello, Mickey!

MRS. GOBINEAU

(after a long pause, spoken)
Hello, darling! My darling! You sound so
near to-night!

MR. GOBINEAU

Yes, so near.

MRS. GOBINEAU

I can almost feel him.

MR. GOBINEAU

Oh, he is going away now.
(The laughter dies away little by little.)

MRS. GOBINEAU

Good by, my sweet, kiss me.
(Smiling, her eyes closed, Mrs. Gobineau lifts her face as if to receive the kisses of her ghostly child.)

MR. GOBINEAU

We'll be back soon.

(Complete silence. There is a long pause. Suddenly, with a loud gasp, Baba clutches at her throat with both hands.)

BABA

What is it? Who is it?

Who is there?

(Baba gets up suddenly, throwing her chair back and turns on the light. She looks terror-stricken at her clients, then runs wildly to the top of the stairwell and looks down, then runs back. The clients look at each other in great amazement and whisper among themselves.)
(terror-stricken)

Who touched me?

MR. GOBINEAU

(bewildered)

What do you mean?

BABA

I said, who touched me?

MR. & MRS. GOBINEAU

I don't know,

But why be afraid?

MRS. NOLAN

I don't know,

But why be afraid?

MR. & MRS. GOBINEAU

There is nothing strange about that.

It often happened before.

MRS. NOLAN

I just don't see what's strange about that!

BABA

(trembling with fear)

No, no, you don't understand.

A hand touched me in the dark.

MR. GOBINEAU

Oh, yes, that has often happened to me.

MRS. GOBINEAU

(tenderly)

Me too, I always feel Mickey's hand on my hair.

BABA

It couldn't be. I can't understand.

MR. GOBINEAU

You're not afraid, are you?

BABA

Go home, leave me alone.

Can't you see? I'm not feeling well.

Go home, leave me alone.

(stamping on the floor with sudden fury)

Get out!

Get out!

(Mr. and Mrs. Gobineau and Mrs. Nolan get their coats hurriedly and then begin slowly to file out.)

MR. & MRS. GOBINEAU, MRS. NOLAN

But why be afraid, afraid of our dead?

(They all disappear down the stairwell. At the slamming of the door downstairs, Monica runs out from stage right, still wrapped in veils.)

MONICA

Baba, what has happened?

BABA

(whispered)

Give me something to drink.

(Monica goes to the cupboard and pours out a drink. Baba is shaking all over.)

Monica . . .

MONICA

Yes . . .

BABA

We must never do this again.
(*Baba drinks.*)

MONICA

But what has happened?

BABA

Monica . . .

MONICA

Yes . . .

BABA

We must give them their money back.

MONICA

(*surprised*)
But why?

BABA

Why? Didn't you see?
While I was still pretending to be in a
trance,
All of a sudden in the dark
I felt on my throat a hand —
A cold, cold hand.
It wasn't the hand of a man.
Monica, I'm afraid!

MONICA

Baba, Baba, you're imagining things!
You've been drinking again.
What else could it be?

BABA

No, no . . . no, it was there . . .
I felt on my skin . . . ev'ry finger . . . see . . .
. like this!
Monica, Monica, I'm afraid!
Yes, I'm afraid!
Where is Toby?

(*She draws the curtains of the puppet theater,
revealing Toby, motionless, as if in a trance.*)

He! He's the one!

(*Toby starts.*)

I know now!

He did it!

Yes, yes . . . he did it!

MONICA

Oh, Baba, Baba, leave him alone!

BABA

I can read it in his eyes.

MONICA

You're drunk again!

BABA

Look at him! The way he grins at me. He
knows, he knows.
(*Baba drags him out of the puppet theater.*)
He did it to frighten me.
(*to Toby*)
Isn't it true?

MONICA

Nonsense!
(*She tries to tear Baba away from Toby, who
is crouched on the floor trembling with fear.*)

BABA

It was you who touched me!

MONICA

Oh!

BABA

It was you! It was you!
He knows . . . he knows . . .

MONICA

O, Baba, stop tormenting him!
You know he is such a helpless thing.

BABA

Ah! A helpless thing!
 Just because he cannot speak we take him
 for a half-wit,
 But he knows a great deal.
 He knows much more than we think.
 There is something uncanny about him.
 He sees things we don't see.
 Get up! Get up!

MONICA

Come, Baba!
 Come, Baba!

BABA

I tell you, don't trust him!
 I warn you — keep away from him!
 Beware of him! Beware!

(Monica draws her away from Toby. She sits down, and Baba lies at her feet, her head on Monica's lap.)

MONICA

Come, Baba. Come, Baba.
(Monica begins gently to rock Baba.)
 The sun has fallen and it lies in blood.
(Toby, already obvious of what has happened, takes an old tambourine from under the couch, and lying on the floor, accompanies the tune with soft taps on the instrument.)
 The moon is weaving bandages of gold.
 O black swan, where, oh, where is my lover gone?
 Torn and tattered is my bridal gown,
 And my lamp is lost, and my lamp is lost.
 With silver needles and with silver thread,
 The stars stitch a shroud for the dying sun.
 O black swan, where, oh, where has my lover gone?

I had given him a kiss of fire,
 And a golden ring,
 Don't you hear your lover moan?
 Eyes of glass and feet of stone,
 Shells for teeth and weeds for tongue,
 Deep, deep, down in the river's bed he's
 looking for the ring.
 Eyes wide open, never asleep,
 He's looking for the ring, looking for the ring.
 The spools unravel and the needles break.

MONICA AND BABA

The sun is buried and the stars weep.
 O black wave, take me away with you.
 I will share with you my golden hair,
 And my bridal crown, and my bridal
 crown.
 Oh, take me down with you.
 Take me down to my wand'ring lover with
 my child unborn,
 With my child unborn.

VOICE

(off-stage)
 Mother, mother, are you there?
 Mother, mother, are you there?

BABA

Sh!
 Listen, listen . . .

MONICA

What?
(laughter is heard)

BABA

Can't you hear?
(Monica shakes her head.)

MONICA

Again you're imagining things.

BABA

No, no, I'm sure I heard a voice like yours.
 Someone must be hiding back there.
 Toby, go back and see who it is.

MONICA

Baba, don't be foolish,
 Nobody's there!

BABA

(to Toby)
 Go on, go on.
(Toby runs out.)

MONICA

What has come over you, Baba?
 I've never seen you like this.

BABA

We are not alone! We are not alone!
 He's coming! He's running back.
(Toby reappears in the doorway. After staring at him in silence Baba says:)
 Did you see anything?
(Toby shakes his head.)

MONICA

I told you, I told you there is nobody there.

BABA

(to Toby)
 You're lying! You don't want to tell me . . .
 Liar! liar!

MONICA

Baba, stop it!

BABA

Oh, God, what is happening to me?
 What is this darkness?
(forcing Toby to his knees)
 Kneel down, kneel down, and pray God to
 save our souls.

(Toby kneels down; Baba fetches the rosary and sits as before, mumbling at Monica's feet.)

BABA

(mechanically, in a deep voice)
 Ave Maria, gratia plena,
 Dominus tecum etc.
 Sancta Maria, Mater Dei etc.

MONICA

Oh, The moon is weaving
 bandages of gold.
 O black wave,
 O black wave,
 Take me down with you,
 Take me down with you.
(Baba suddenly stops praying. Child's laughter is heard as Baba hides her head in Monica's lap.)

* ACT II *

(Same setting as Act I — evening, a few days later. Monica is sitting in front of the puppet theater watching a performance. The puppets have fallen in a heap. Toby comes out to acknowledge Monica's applause.)

MONICA

Bravo!
 And after the theater, supper and dance.
 Music!
 Um-pa-pa, um-pa-pa,
(During this song, Toby, barefooted, dances about the stage.)
 Up in the sky
 Some-one is playing a trombone and a guitar.
 Red is your tie.
 And in your velvetine coat you hide a star.
 Monica, Monica, dance the waltz.
 Monica, Monica, dance the waltz.

Follow me, moon and sun,
Keep time with me, one two three one.
If you're not shy,
Pin up my hair with your star, and buckle
my shoe.
And when you fly,
Please hold on tight to my waist, I'm flying
with you.
O, Monica, Monica, dance the waltz.
Monica, Monica, dance the waltz.
Follow me, moon and sun,
Follow me.

(Toby seizes Monica abruptly by the arm. She turns and looks at him in complete astonishment.)

What is the matter, Toby?

What is it you want to tell me?

(He looks at her in desperation, and gently touches her face. Monica begins to understand.)

MONICA

Kneel down before me,

(Toby kneels.)

And now, tell me . . .

(She kneels behind Toby, as if the words were coming from him, and makes Toby look up as if she were still standing in front of him. With slightly exaggerated pathos she says:)

Monica, Monica, can't you see,
That my heart is bleeding, bleeding for
you?

I loved you, Monica, all my life,
With all my breath, with all my blood.

You haunt the mirror of my sleep,

You are my night.

You are my light and the jailer of my day.

(Quickly she gets up and stands before him.)

How dare you, scoundrel, talk to me like
that!

Don't you know who I am?
I'm the Queen of Aroundel!
I shall have you put in chains!
*(She kneels behind him again. Toby, falling
in with the game, mimics her words with
gestures.)*

You are my princess, you are my queen,
And I'm only Toby, one of your slaves,
And still I love you and always loved you
With all my breath, with all my blood.
I love your laughter, I love your hair,
I love your deep and nocturnal eyes.
I love your soft hands, so white and
winged,
I love the slender branch of your throat.
(She stands up before him.)
Toby, don't speak to me like that!
You make my head swim.
(She runs behind Toby.)

MONICA

Monica, Monica, fold me in your satin
gown.

Monica, Monica, give me your mouth,
Monica, Monica, fall in my arms.

*(Toby suddenly hides his face in his arms.
Monica stares at him, completely bewildered.)*
Why, Toby!

You're not crying, are you?

*(She caresses his head. Then lifting his tear-
stained face, looks into his eyes. With great
tenderness she says:)*

Toby, I want you to know that you have the
most beautiful voice in the world!

*(A door slams. Baba is heard dragging herself
up the stairs. Monica runs out, into her room.
Toby crouches in the corner. Baba appears,
dark, dishevelled, a bottle in her hand.)*

BABA

Where is Monica?

(Toby points to the door at the right. Baba takes off her large shawl and sits meditatively at the table. With strained affection she says:)

Toby, what are you doing?

Come here, Toby.

I want to talk to you.

(Toby begins to crawl toward her, but very hesitatingly, with apparent misgivings.)

Come, come near me.

What are you afraid of?

Come, come nearer, this way.

(She takes his head in her lap.)

BABA

(with calculated tenderness)

Toby, you know that I love you as if you were my own son.

I'm often harsh with you, that's true.

Still, still, if it hadn't been for me,

Where would you be now?

I found you, a little starving gipsy, roaming the streets of Budapest

without a tongue to speak your hunger.

If I hadn't taken you with me, who would have cared for you, poor little

half-wit?

And now, listen, now we must be good friends.

I'll never punish you, never, never again,

And I will buy you a new shirt of bright red silk and a golden scarf.

(freely)

But first you must tell me.

Were you the one who touched my throat?

You know, at the seance a few days ago . . .

Don't be afraid of telling me.

I won't punish you.

I just want to know, that is all.

(very winningly)

Just tell me, yes, or no.

(after a long pause)

Come, don't be afraid, yes, or no.

(making great efforts to contain herself)

I know it anyway, but show me how you did it.

Come on, wake up, wake up, I say, damn you!

(She suddenly springs up with rage. Then she sinks back into her chair, regretting her outburst.)

You see, you make me angry, and I want to be your friend.

Now tell me, my sweet, my own little Toby, did you touch me that night?

You like that bolt of red silk, don't you?

Would you like to have it?

All you have to make is one little sign, and they will be yours.

(gently)

It was you who touched me, wasn't it?

Perhaps it was not you after all . . .

Perhaps it was something else . . .

Something I couldn't see?

But you know, you saw it!

I can read it in your eyes!

Come on, say yes, or no!

Stop staring at me!

(Toby tries to run away; she grabs him by his shirt and tears it off his back.)

Don't go away!

You see, you're making me angry again!

(with mounting excitement)

You love Monica, don't you?

How would you like to marry her?

Yes, you could, you could.

But first you must tell me, did you have anything to do with what happened that

night?

Did you see anything?

A light? a shape?

Wake up!

Did you?

Stop staring at me!

Did you?

(with uncontrolled fury)

Ah, so!

You don't want to answer.

You're trying to frighten me.

I'll show you, damn little gipsy,

(She goes to cupboard and brings out a long whip. Toby runs away from her in terror.)

I'll make you talk!

I'll make you talk!

You cannot get away from me!

(She chases him around the table.)

I'll make you spit out blood, I will.

(Toby trips and falls near the couch.)

I'll make you spit out blood!

So you won't answer, eh!

(She whips him.)

So you won't answer, eh!

(The doorbell rings repeatedly and very loudly.

Baba suddenly realizes that the doorbell is ringing.

She stands still for a moment, panting hoarsely, then walks haltingly to stage left and rings the buzzer. Monica runs in from stage right.)

MONICA

Oh, Baba, what did you do to him?

(She comforts Toby. Mr. and Mrs. Gobineau and Mrs. Nolan come up the stairs. They stop rather surprised on the landing.)

MRS. GOBINEAU AND MRS. NOLAN

Good evening, Madame Flora.

MR. GOBINEAU

Good evening.

BABA

What do you want?

MR. & MRS. GOBINEAU

Isn't this the night of the seance?

BABA

The seance?

Yes, yes, I'm glad you came.

I've something to tell you, come in.

(The three clients advance into the room.)

There will be no more seances.

There is your money.

(She brusquely throws a wad of money on the table.)

MRS. NOLAN

No more seances?

MR. GOBINEAU

What do you mean?

BABA

Listen to me!

There never was a seance!

I cheated you!

Do you understand?

Cheated you, cheated you!

MR. & MRS. GOBINEAU, MRS. NOLAN

How could it be?

It isn't true, you must not say so!

MRS. NOLAN

I clearly saw my daughter,

I saw her, with my own eyes!

MR. & MRS. GOBINEAU

And little Mickey, laughing,

touching my hair!

BABA

Nothing but a fraud,
I can prove it to you.

(She goes to the puppet theater and pulls the cables which levitate the table and control the lamp)

Look here, the lights, the wires to make the table move.

The hidden microphone.

MRS. NOLAN

(intensely)

Oh, no! I saw my daughter, I saw her!

BABA

Your daughter, here she is!

Cheap white gauze, nothing else.

MRS. NOLAN

But I spoke to her.

BABA

Monica, Monica, let her hear your voice,
show her.

MONICA

(reluctantly)

"Mother, mother, are you there?"

Mother, mother, are you there?"

MRS. NOLAN

Oh, no, no, no, that isn't the same voice!

BABA

And do the little boy laughing.

MONICA

(imitates the peals of childish laughter as in the first Act.)

MRS. GOBINEAU

(with desperate determination)

Oh, no! You know that isn't the same!

BABA

You fools!

What more proofs do you want?

MRS. NOLAN

Not to know my own daughter's voice!

Could that be? Could that be?

MR. & MRS. GOBINEAU

Not to know little Mickey's touch!

Could that be? Could that be?

MRS. NOLAN

No, no, no, it wasn't a fraud!

What you said is not the truth!

BABA

What? You don't believe me!

MRS. NOLAN

I even found the little locket she talked about.

MR. & MRS. GOBINEAU

Did you?

BABA

The locket?

Ev'rybody has some old locket.

It's an old trick; we use it on ev'ry mother!

MR. GOBINEAU

(almost fiercely)

It might well be you thought you were cheating all the while,

But you were not, you were not.

MR. & MRS. GOBINEAU, MRS. NOLAN

Surely now, you won't let us down!

What would we do without your guidance?

(The three clients suddenly stand expression-

less like automatons.)

Please let us have our seance, Madame Flora!

Just let us hear it once more, Madame Flora!

This is the only joy we have in our lives, Madame Flora!

Our little dead are waiting for us, Madame Flora!

You wouldn't keep us away from them would you, Madame Flora?

Please let us have our seance, Madame Flora!

Just let us have it once more, just once more, Madame Flora!

BABA

You must believe me!

You must believe me!

(declaimed at a high pitch, as before)

It is foolish of you!

You must believe me!

You must!

(trying in vain to force the money into their hands)

Here is your money . . .

Take it! Please!

Take it!

Go to someone else!

Please! Please!

BABA

(with sudden fury)

Get out of here, get out, get out!

Get out of here.

You fools! You fools!

(The Gobineaus and Mrs. Nolan greatly frightened, disappear down the stairwell.)

Fools!

Fools!

(The door slams.)

BABA

(to Toby)

And you, you too get out and never come back!

MONICA

Don't say that! Toby, so helpless!

BABA

Yes, he must go!

MONICA

No, Baba, you cannot send him away.

You know he can't take care of himself.

BABA

I don't care.

MONICA

He is hardly more than a child.

BABA

That may be, but still he must go away.

I cannot bear to see those hunted eyes.

MONICA

Then let me go and take care of him!

BABA

You'll do nothing of the sort!

MONICA

Yes, Baba, if he must go, I will too.

BABA

You'll do nothing of the sort!

MONICA

Baba!

BABA

He must go!

MONICA

Baba!

BABA

He must go, go away!

MONICA

How can you be so cruel? Poor boy!

BABA

Don't worry, he will take care of himself,
He'll surely find a place where he can stay.

MONICA

Oh, please don't let him go!

BABA

I cannot bear to look at him!
I tell you he must go!

MONICA

Oh, please don't let him go!
(*to Toby*) Don't go!

BABA

Yes, he must go before it is too late!
Get out, get out!
(*Toby starts quickly down the stairwell.*)

MONICA

(*shouted*)

Toby!

(*At the sound of Monica's voice, Toby stops and turns hesitantly toward her. Monica runs to him; they clasp each other in a brief but desperate embrace. Then Toby frees himself and disappears down the stairwell. Monica sees the puppets lying on the floor. She picks them up.*)
Don't stand there like a fool!

Go into your room!
Leave him alone.

He'll take care of himself.

(*Monica goes into her room, banging the door.*)

Baba is left alone on stage.)

VOICE

Mother, mother, are you there?
(*She stands stock-still and terror stricken.*)

BABA

Who's there? Is it you, Monica?
(*She abruptly moves toward the bedroom. After listening at the door, she quickly locks it, then leans against it with a sigh of relief. She begins to walk toward the table.*)

VOICE

Mother, mother, are you there?
(*At the sound of the voice, she stands frozen. She interrupts the voice with a cry.*)

BABA

(*shouted*)

Stop it!

(*She goes to the cupboard and pours herself several drinks then brings the bottle and glass to the table. She sits down.*)

Afraid, am I afraid?

Madame Flora afraid!

Can it be that I'm afraid?

In my young days I have seen many terrible things!

Women screaming as they were murdered,
And men's hands dripping with blood, and
men haunted by knives.

And little grotesque children drained white
by the voraciousness of filth,

And loathsome old men insane with vice,
And young men with cankers crawling on
their flesh like hungry lizards.

This I've seen, and more, and never been
afraid.

O God!

Forgive my sins,

I'm sick and old.
Forgive my sins and give me peace!
What ill wind shakes my hand?
What unseen ghost stands by my side?
No, no, it cannot be the dead!
The dead . . . the dead . . .
The dead never come back.
They sink down in the dust
With no eyes to dream and no silence to
keep,

No secrets to hide!

Gone, empty, nothing, nothing.

(drowsily and a little drunkenly)

"O black swan, where, oh, where is my
lover gone?"

*(Wheeling about in her chair, she breaks off
the song with a startled cry.)*

Who is there?

*(Her voice shaking, scarcely daring to breathe,
she stares fixedly into the darkness and listens.)*

"O black swan, O black swan . . ."

(turning again with a cry)

What?

(After a long silence, with a sigh of relief.)

Nothing, but then if there is nothing to be
afraid of why am I afraid of
this nothingness?

I must forget about it, laugh at it, yes, laugh
at it!

*(She chuckles drunkenly. Little by little, her
laughter becomes wilder. Her laughter has
now reached an hysterical pitch. She suddenly
stops laughing.)*

O God, forgive my sins,

I'm sick and old.

*(She falls asleep. Toby comes up the stairwell.
Cautiously, he walks tiptoe to Monica's door.
He finds the door locked. He scratches softly
on the door. Baba stirs in her sleep, knocking*

*the bottle down. Toby runs behind the couch,
then very slowly creeps out again. Toby again
tries the door. He knocks at it, whimpering
softly like an animal. Receiving no answer,
Toby runs to the trunk and begins to rum-
mage among the silks in search of his tambou-
rine. The trunk lid falls sharply. Baba wakes
up with a start. Toby hides behind the curtain
of the puppet theater.)*

BABA

Who's there? Who's there?

Answer me!

Monica, Monica, is it you?

Who is it then?

If you are human, answer me!

Who is it? Who is it?

*(She takes a revolver out of a drawer in the
table. She says hysterically.)*

Speak out or I'll shoot!

I'll shoot! I'll shoot!

Answer me! Answer me!

I'll shoot! I'll shoot!

*(The curtain moves. Baba screams and fires at
it several times. Suddenly Toby's hand appears
above the curtain, as if to ward off the bullets.
Then the fingers slowly clench and the hand
disappears. The curtain is now clutched tightly
from inside. A spot of blood gradually appears
and runs the length of the white cloth.)*

I've killed the ghost!

I've killed the ghost!

*(Both of Toby's hands are now seen clutch-
ing at the curtain. The rod breaks under his
weight, and, wrapped in the curtain, he falls
headlong into the room. Monica pounds at the
door from within.)*

MONICA

Baba! Baba!

Let me in! Let me in!

(Baba slowly unlocks the door. Monica rushes in. Seeing Toby's body, she stops short and sways as if suddenly ill.)

Oh!

(Calling in a faint, broken voice she slowly moves toward the stairwell.)

Help! Help!

(louder as she runs downstairs)

Help!

(The door slams. Baba slowly bends over Toby.)

BABA

(in a hoarse whisper)

Was it you? Was it you?

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***About the Artists ***

Mezzo-soprano Joyce Castle brings her finely crafted interpretation of Baba from the stage to this Cedille recording of *The Medium*. Her distinguished international career includes such diverse roles as Claire Zakanassian in Von Einem's *The Visit of the Old Lady* (New York premiere), Alla Nazimova in Argento's *The Dream of Valentino* (world premiere), Augusta Tabor in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, Klytemnestra in Elektra, and Fricka and Waltraute in *The Ring*. Of her performances, New York critic Bill Zakariasen wrote "In the dual assignment of Fricka and Waltraute Joyce Castle decisively proved her pre-eminence among mezzo-sopranos."

Miss Castle has performed as a principal artist in over a dozen productions at the

Metropolitan Opera including Orlovsky in *Die Fledermaus*, the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*, Frugala in *Il tabarro* and Zita in *Gianni Schicchi*. At the New York City Opera she has performed Mrs. Lovett in the Hal Prince production of *Sweeney Todd*, Madame d'Urfe in the New York premiere of Argento's *Casanova*, Augusta Tabor in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, Baba the Turk in the Hockney production of *The Rake's Progress*, Fata Morgana in *The Love for Three Oranges*, and The Old Lady in *Candide*. She has also sung with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Santa Fe Opera, Seattle Opera, and the Washington Opera, and appears regularly at opera houses throughout Canada and Europe.

Joyce Castle has performed and recorded a wide variety of twentieth century music. In repertoire ranging from Bernstein to Ligeti and Weill, she has appeared as soloist with such orchestras as the New York Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Accademia de Santa Cecilia in Rome, Orchestre Nationale de France, and the Jerusalem Symphony. Miss Castle may be heard on New World Records' Grammy Award winning recording of *Candide*, the Koch International Classics' recording titled *The Music of Stefan Wolpe*, and was chosen by Stephen Sondheim to record "Send in the Clowns" for the Book-of-the-Month collection, *Sondheim*.

Joyce Castle's association with the operas of Gian Carlo Menotti began early in her career with performances of *The Saint of Bleeker Street* (Assunta). She has since per-

formed the Mother in *The Consul* at L'Opera de Montréal and recorded Miss Todd in *The Old Maid and the Thief* for Radio France. This recording of *The Medium* reflects an interpretation developed through two productions representing over forty performances of the work.

Patrice Michaels Bedi has sung with opera companies throughout North America including Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Cleveland Opera, Milwaukee's Florentine Opera, the Tacoma Opera, Colorado's Central City Opera, and at the Banff Centre in Canada. Of her performance as Monica in Chicago Opera Theater's 1992 production of *The Medium*, the *Chicago Sun-Times* wrote, "Patrice Michaels Bedi offered a deft balance between innocence and knowledge. Her bright soprano was a ray of youthful sunlight." In concert, she has sung with noted ensembles including the St. Louis, Atlanta, Milwaukee, San Antonio, and Shanghai Symphonies, the Minnesota Orchestra, Chicago's Grant Park Symphony and Music of the Baroque, the Maryland Handel Festival, the Chicago Baroque Ensemble, and Boston Baroque. Conductors with whom she has collaborated include Robert Shaw, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, Nicolas McGegan, Joseph Silverstein, Andrew Parrott, and Zdenek Macal.

Miss Michaels Bedi's acclaimed recordings for Cedille Records include songs by Argento and Vaughan Williams on *To Be Sung Upon the Water* (CDR 90000 029), cantatas and motets by Vivaldi with the Chicago Baroque Ensemble on *A Vivaldi Concert*

(CDR 90000 025), twenty five songs by twenty five different composers on *Songs of the Romantic Age* (CDR 90000 019), and Dominick Argento's *Six Elizabethan Songs* with the Rembrandt Chamber Players on *Twentieth Century Baroque* (CDR 90000 011). Her recordings for other labels include Bach's St. Matthew Passion with Sir Georg Solti and the Chicago Symphony for London Records, Mozart's Requiem on the Amadis label, and Mozart's C minor Mass with Chicago's Music of the Baroque.

Soprano Diane Ragains has appeared with opera companies throughout the United States and is particularly noted for her portrayals of important roles in major twentieth century operas, including those by Britten (*The Turn of the Screw*, *Albert Herring*), Knussen (*Where the Wild Things Are*), Ward (*The Crucible*), and Menotti (*The Consul*, *The Medium*), among others. She has appeared in concert with major ensembles including the Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and New Jersey Symphonies, Chicago's Grant Park Symphony, and the Vermeer Quartet. Ms. Ragains' acclaimed musicianship has led many contemporary composers to write specifically for her. She has previously recorded *Six German Songs* by Louis Spohr and Stravinsky's *Shakespeare Songs* for Crystal Records, and *Automobile* by Russell Peck and *Romancero* by Mario Davidovsky for the CRI label.

Bass-baritone Peter Van De Graaff has sung with many prestigious opera companies including Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago

Opera Theater, Rochester Opera Theater, and Milwaukee's Florentine Opera. He is also active on the concert stage, having appeared with orchestras throughout the United States including the New Orleans, San Antonio, and Utah Symphonies, and in Europe with the Czech State Philharmonic and Budapest Concert Orchestras. A native of the Chicago area, Mr. Van De Graaff has soloed with many local ensembles including Music of the Baroque, the New Oratorio singers, the Apollo Chorus, and Symphony of the Shores. He can be heard as a soloist in Joseph Martin Kraus's oratorio *Der Tot Jesu* on the German Pan label.

Mezzo-soprano Barbara Landis has performed extensively throughout the Chicago area, including for Chicago Opera Theater and the Lyric Opera Guild. Of one such performance, the *Chicago Sun-Times* wrote "Barbara Landis possesses a rich mezzo voice and her dark expressive eyes helped propel the drama . . ." Ms. Landis has also performed recently at the Colorado Lyric Theater Festival and the Britten-Pears school in England, where her performance, as Lucretia, of excerpts from Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, was taped for broadcast by the BBC. In addition to pure operatic roles, recent performances have included turns as Mad Margaret in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Rudigore*, and Aldonza in *Man of La Mancha*.

Joanna Lind has appeared in Chicago Opera Theater's productions of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* as one of the three genies

(1995) and Douglas Moore's *The Ballad of Baby Doe* as Elizabeth Tabor (1994). She has also sung in Chamber Opera Chicago's productions of *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *Werther*, and Lawrence Rapchak's *The Lifework of Juan Diaz*. From 1989 through 1993, Miss Lind was a member of Lyric Opera of Chicago's children's chorus.

Lawrence Rapchak has served as Music Director of Chicago Opera Theater since 1994, for which he recently conducted the Chicago premiere of Daron Hagen's *Shining Brow*. He has also conducted the Louisville Orchestra, Prague Radio Symphony, and Chicago Pro Musica, and serves as Principal Guest Conductor for the Northwest Indiana Symphony. As a composer, Mr. Rapchak's most recent work, *Saetas*, was commissioned and premiered by the Chicago Symphony. His music has also been performed by the orchestras of Detroit, Louisville, and Omaha. Mr. Rapchak's opera, *The Lifework of Juan Diaz*, based on a story by Ray Bradbury, was premiered by Chamber Opera Chicago and released on CD by Albany Records. Mr. Rapchak is also a regular pre-concert speaker for the Chicago Symphony.



Patrice Michaels Bedi

Photo by Dan Rest



Joyce Castle

Photo by Carol Rosegg

FIRST TIME ON COMPACT DISC

GIAN CARLO MENOTTI (b. 1911)

THE MEDIUM


MADAME FLORA (Baba)Joyce Castle
MONICA..... Patrice Michaels Bedi
MRS. GOBINEAU Diane Ragains
MR. GOBINEAU Peter Van De Graaff
MRS. NOLAN Barbara Landis
GIRL'S VOICE* Joanna Lind

Ensemble of Chicago Opera Theater

Lawrence Rapchak, conductor

Teresa Fream and Eugene Pazin, violins; Teri Van Valkinburgh, viola; William Cernota, cello, Gregory Sarchet, bass; Lyon Leifer, flute; Judith Z. Lewis/Grover Schiltz, oboe; Linda Baker, clarinet; Amy Rhodes, bassoon; Robert Johnson, horn; Ross Beacraft, trumpet; Michael Folker, percussion; Michael J. Wilson and Michael Cullen, piano. Additional strings*: Daniela Folker, violin; Henrietta Neeley, viola.

*Heard at special moments in the opera (the mute role of Toby is not represented on the recording).

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