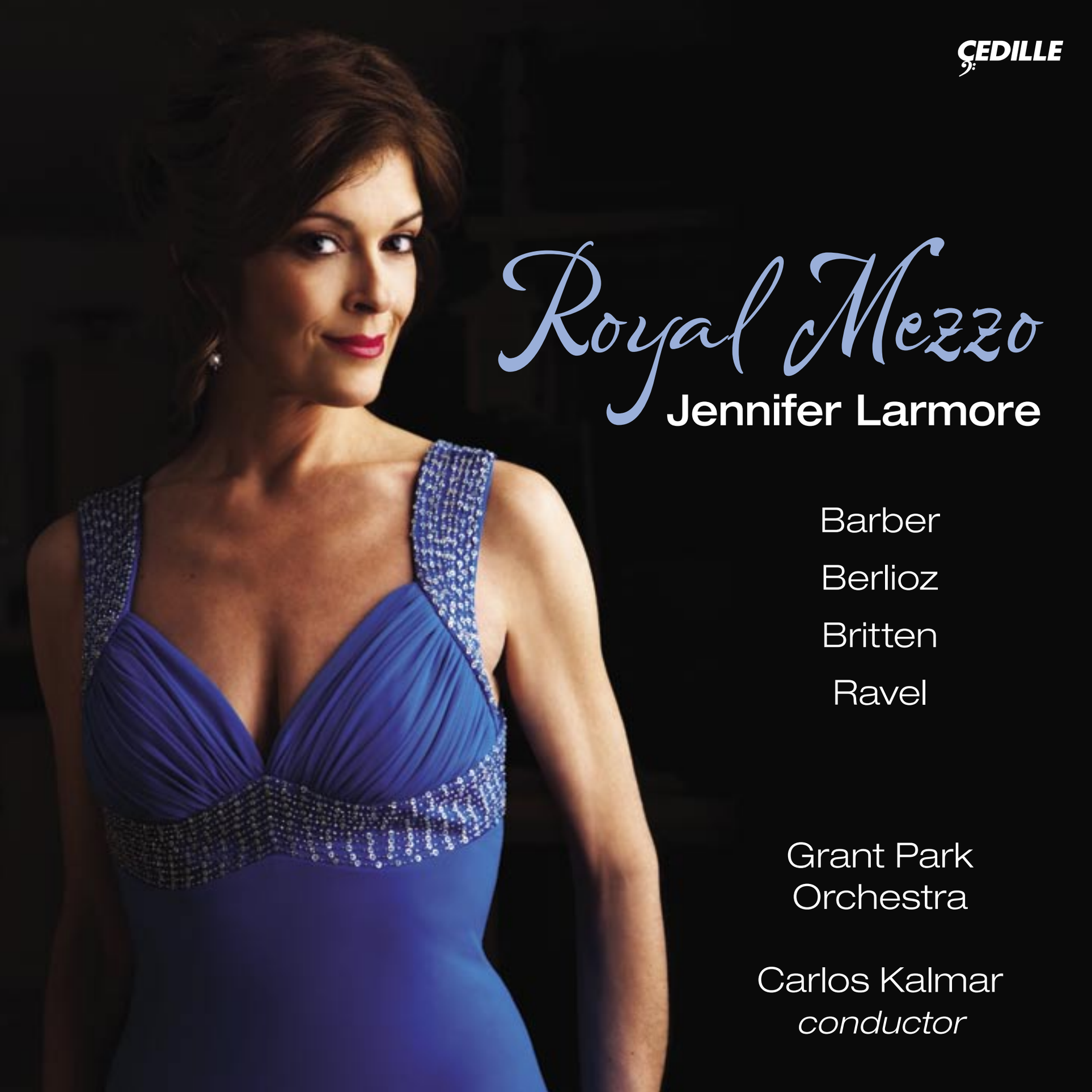
ÇEDILLE
Royal Mezzo
Jennifer Larmore
Barber
Berlioz
Britten
Ravel
Grant Park
Orchestra
Carlos Kalmar
conductor

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Royal Mezzo

Jennifer Larmore
mezzo-soprano

Grant Park Orchestra

Carlos Kalmar
conductor

Samuel Barber (1910–1981)
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Hector Berlioz (1803–1869)
La mort de Cléopâtre (21:32)
2 Recitativo: "C'en est donc fait!" (3:11)
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6 I. Asie (10:14)
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Royal Mezzo

Notes by Andrea Lamoreaux

The word "Cantata" had two meanings in the Baroque era. One is represented by Bach's compositions for Lutheran church services in Leipzig: works for soloists, chorus, and small orchestra that both reproduced and commented upon texts from the Bible in a succession of recitatives, arias, and chorales. The secular cantatas of Handel and Alessandro Scarlatti (and numerous lesser-known contemporaries) are quite different. Usually scored for one singer — sometimes two — with accompaniment from perhaps five or six instrumentalists, these short and vivid dramas depict stories from classical mythology or poems about rejected and despairing lovers. Recitative portions laying out the plots are alternated with arias expressing the character's feelings. These cantatas were an alternative to opera for aristocratic audiences who would otherwise be deprived of theatrical entertainment during seasons (such as Lent) when edicts from church and crown kept opera houses dark.

The generation that followed Bach and Handel kept up the tradition of the secular cantata but called it by different names. It might be called a "scena" (scene) or a concert aria. (Mozart produced quite a few concert arias.) The intention remained the same whatever the terminology: to create a miniature music drama.

A slightly different but parallel development arose in vocal music during the early 19th century. The purpose of the song-cycle was less dramatic than narrative: Schubert's "Die schöne Müllerin" (The Beautiful Miller-Maid), for example, which tells a continuous story and sets a prevailing mood, rather than displaying a colorful emotional moment — more tapestry than portrait. Song-cycles often accompany the voice just with piano, though some, like Berlioz's "Nuits d'Été" and Richard Strauss's "Four Last Songs," are scored with orchestra. Maurice Ravel followed this route in "Shéhérazade."

History, myth, and legend have transmitted memorable images of extraordinary individuals trapped in crises. Playwrights and composers have portrayed these figures again and again to re-interpret and re-illuminate the emotions that drive them — passion, grief, guilt, revenge — and to remind us of the vulnerable mortality all humans share. *Royal Mezzo* brings together three portraits from ancient times cast in widely divergent musical languages and poetic styles. All three are descended from the tradition of the solo cantata and the quasi-operatic scena.

In contrast to these dramatic vignettes is Ravel's song-cycle, a diffuse sequence of songs drawn out of the world of dreams: no less colorful than the scenas, but inspired by a poetic imagination that longed for exotic escape from reality, rather than seeking a dynamic confrontation with reality as seen across centuries and millennia.

Though he called his cycle "Shéhérazade," Ravel didn't choose his texts from *The Arabian Nights*. Those tales, famously told by Queen Scheherazade to hold her husband's fascinated attention through 1001 nights — and thus distract him from his original plan, which was to kill her — drew Ravel at one point to contemplate a full-scale opera. (The only survival of that project is a "fairy overture" also called "Shéhérazade.") Meanwhile, the French poet Arthur LeClère, who preferred to call himself Tristan Klingsor (apparently he liked Wagner), was creating an evocative volume of Asian-inspired verse, for which he also borrowed the name "Shéhérazade." Three poems from this collection make up Ravel's 1903 cycle.

Fast-forward 60 years to 1962–63, the New York Philharmonic's first season in its new home at Lincoln Center. The Philharmonic commissioned a new work for soprano and orchestra from Samuel Barber, a composer who was himself a singer and whose previous vocal achievements included atmospheric settings of both prose and poetry: "Dover Beach" (Matthew Arnold), "Knoxville: Summer of 1915" (James Agee), and "Hermit Songs" (anonymous medieval verses). For the commission, Barber delved into the remote past of ancient Greece. Often described as "neo-Romantic," admired for his lyrical gifts but sometimes dismissed

as old-fashioned, Barber employed a decidedly contemporary musical language for "Andromache's Farewell," focusing on the fury in the text as much as on the grief and pathos: several orchestral passages are marked to be played "with hatred."

The Trojan War has ended. The Greeks have killed the city's warriors and captured their widows and orphans. Euripides's tragedy *The Trojan Women* explores the fates and emotions of these survivors, who face no future to speak of. The women are being parceled out among the victors… the children, what of them? Andromache is the widow of Hector, the Trojan hero who fought hardest and bravest against the Greeks. She will be allotted as "slave-wife" (in the words of the preface to Barber's score) to the son of Achilles, the man who killed Hector. Not content with just this revenge, the Greeks have decided that Andromache and Hector's son, Astyanax, must be thrown over the ramparts of Troy. A hero's son cannot be allowed to live; that he's a little boy, still clinging to his mother's skirts, means nothing.

John Patrick Creagh translated Andromache's words from Euripides especially for this composition, which opens with a powerful motive on trombone and tuba that recurs throughout the scena. Flutes and violins screech a contrasting motive of grief and despair. The orchestral introduction continues to build in intensity, punctuated by a large percussion battery. The sizeable orchestra often plays as a unified ensemble, but there are also numerous solo passages that add individual voices to the chorus of despair. A clarinet solo lends its motive to the singer's first entrance: "So you must die, my son."

Both voice and instruments perform melodic patterns that emphasize dissonance and agitation: intervals of minor seconds, minor thirds, diminished fifths, sevenths, and ninths abound. The vocal line especially features wide leaps. There's a dramatic descent on the words "Falling, falling, thus will your life end." At several points the singer portrays emotion not fortissimo but pianissimo: soft high notes give special meaning to the phrases "Was it for nothing that I nursed you" and "Come close, embrace me."

The climax of rage comes in the Allegro molto section that forms an intense coda to the work. Here Andromache turns her wrath upon Helen, whose abduction from Greece by Hector's brother Paris unleashed the 10-year Trojan War. Andromache curses Helen's fateful beauty, then gives up her son and allows herself to be led away. A powerful instrumental interlude leads to her final words: "Hide my head in shame… across the grave of my own son I come."

The earliest of our compositions is the 1829 lyric scene called variously "Cleopatra" or "The Death of Cleopatra," which the young Hector Berlioz wrote as part of his ongoing quest to win the Prix de Rome. This prestigious honor was awarded to aspiring French composers by Paris's Académie des Beaux Arts and provided a stipend for study in Rome. The catch was that to win the prize you had to follow the academy's rather conservative rules of musical construction and style using a pre-selected cantata text. Berlioz (never too big on following rules) eventually did win the prize, although not for "Cleopatra," which was considered too dramatic and perhaps too new-sounding; the composer allowed his romantic imagination free rein in this highly-charged tale from the days of the Roman Empire. Hearing it today, especially on this CD, where it comes after Barber's dissonant work, "Cleopatra" seems decidedly "classical" in its harmonic language. But Berlioz's flair for the dramatic and his brilliant, colorful orchestration are readily apparent, even in this piece from his days of artistic apprenticeship.

Without aspiring to the level of great poetry, the text by P.A. Vieillard fully serves Berlioz's purpose of setting up a dramatic situation to exploit musically. The story of Egypt's glamorous queen is familiar to us from sources as varied as Shakespeare, George Bernard Shaw, Richard Burton, and Elizabeth Taylor. Having loved and captivated both Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, Cleopatra has lost them both, one killed in a political assassination, the other in battle with Octavian. She has discovered that Octavian is not susceptible to her charms: "the daughter of the Ptolemies has suffered the insult of refusal." Exacerbating her feelings of shame and guilt is her realization that

it is partly her fault that her homeland has been conquered by the Romans.

The short orchestral introduction, a mini-overture, presents a vigorous, agitated string theme punctuated with a couple of measures of rhythmic syncopation leading to a fortissimo chord for the whole orchestra and an ominous low-clarinet theme that brings us to the soloist's first recitative: "So, then, my shame is complete." Cleopatra reflects upon her unsuccessful attempts to sway Octavian. As in operatic recitative, the singer must get through quite a lot of words quickly to set out the story. The light accompaniment is mostly for strings alone. The first aria, marked Lento Cantabile, settles the full orchestra into the key of E-Flat Major to offer a beautiful introductory melody, but syncopated accents reveal that all is not peaceful. The aria recalls Cleopatra's days of triumph: "Tormenting memory of days gone by, when I shared the glory of Caesar and Antony, beautiful as Venus." The midsection finds the cruel recent memory of Octavian intruding upon her happier thoughts of the past. A slightly varied reprise brings the aria to a close.

The second recitative, accompanied by strings alone, is shorter but no less agitated than the opening: "Au comble des revers…". Cleopatra acknowledges the harm she has done not only to herself but also to her country; she accuses herself of tarnishing the heritage of Egypt's past glories and dishonoring the proud line of Pharaohs. It is to these dead Pharaohs that she speaks in her second aria, subtitled Meditation and introduced by a slowly-evolving chromatic theme in the lower winds and brasses, with syncopated pizzicatos in the strings. The key is F Minor; the tempo is Largo misterioso. In the score, the Shakespeare-loving Berlioz inserted a line from *Romeo and Juliet:* "How if, when I am laid into the tomb…". Cleopatra asks in the aria's first phrase: "Mighty Pharaohs, noble Lagides, will you, without wrath watch her enter, to rest in your pyramids, a queen unworthy of you?" "No!" she emphatically concludes in a faster section marked Allegro assai agitato: she would shame them by her presence, and their ghosts would rise up against her. She repeats these sentiments several times, and the orchestral sound, as if reflecting the Pharaohs' anger, grows steadily in intensity. The mode shifts from minor to major as Cleopatra's frenzy of guilt increases. The mood and instrumentation of the Meditation's opening are briefly recalled, but Cleopatra has arrived at her answer: she cannot continue to live with her dishonor, she must die. The disjointed vocal motives of the coda reveal her decision: "In the face of the horror which hems me in, a vile reptile is my resort." Leading up to this fateful decision we hear a long descending chromatic line in the strings, almost an instrumental scream. Thereafter, the orchestra somewhat effaces itself to give prominence to the words of the dying queen. With her last breath she invokes Caesar. The violins and violas, beginning pianissimo, play ostinato two-note patterns that suggest the beating of the queen's heart. These become louder and faster, then die away on a slow diminuendo as the tempo slows from Allegro to Adagio. A rumbling final phrase for all of the strings swells briefly, then diminishes and dies away very softly. She is dead.

Berlioz's Cleopatra has suffered through the kind of remorse and anguish philosophers have described as "the dark night of the soul." Her resolution was self-destruction. Barber's Andromache protested and lamented her fate and moved on to a kind of living death: sent into exile, bereft of husband and son. The world of "Shéhérazade" has no such hard edges of reality. It is a kind of extended daydream, with three allusive and evocative poems that are set in no particular place or time, relevant only to the workings of poetic and musical imagination. Ravel's orchestra enhances the other-worldly exoticism with its emphasis on tone color: we hear the mellow, haunting sound of the English horn as often as that of its brighter cousin, the oboe, and harp glissandi shimmer around the singer's words. The varied percussion battery includes cymbals of different sizes, a Basque drum, and the bell-like celesta. The first song, by far the longest, is like an extended recitative; voice and instruments present evanescent motives instead of shaped melodies. We're being taken on an extended armchair tour of a highly fictionalized Asia by an anonymous narrator who admits he's fantasizing: "Asia, Asia, Asia, marvelous old land of nursery tales."

Muted strings and a floating oboe theme launch these words almost in a whisper. As we continue our journey, we hear hints of themes that employ the whole-tone scale, an "Oriental" color-effect that charmed both Ravel and Debussy. The singer, meanwhile, comments on some delightfully strange sights: a sailing ship that departs by night, islands of flowers, the minarets of the Middle East, merchants clad in rich velvet and long fringed coats. Woodwinds and harps swirl and swoop as scenes quickly succeed one another. The tempo slows down a bit, but picks up again after we have passed Persia and India to reach the high point of the narrator's anticipation: China. The orchestra puts a fortissimo exclamation point on this word, then immediately subsides to pianissimo.

In "China" we are shown both dark and light, painted landscapes and beautiful princesses, but also swords, "paupers and queens, . . . roses and blood." Tempo contrasts are frequent in this China narrative. A climax is reached as the singer exclaims, "People dying of love or [even better] of hate." The orchestra brings us back from this symbolic brink of death with a powerful tutti interlude that anticipates the Sunrise passage in Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloe* ballet. This subsides into another muted passage as the singer looks forward to returning home and spellbinding her listeners with tales of her great adventure. And yet she has never left home. The quiet ending — flutes, percussion, and strings — seems to say, "Only a dream after all."

"La flûte enchantée," the second and most familiar of the songs, opens with the first real tune of the cycle, played on the flute, recurring as a main theme. The slow, soft opening evokes an elderly man asleep. But his young servant is still awake, and as the pace quickens and brightens, she tells us the flute music is being played by her lover outside the window. The entire orchestra picks up a broadened version of the flute theme as the singer muses on the melody and on love. But there will be no rendezvous tonight: the only kisses are from the haunting notes of the flute, whose theme has the last word, pianissimo.

"L'indifferent" is the most dreamlike and elusive of the three songs. Over undulating, repeated string figurations, flute and clarinet offer a wandering theme. The singer's opening theme, contemplative and rhythmically free, sets a mood of distant observation as she views a handsome youth with an almost girlish figure passing by the window. The singer wishes to invite him in, but the stranger passes by, oblivious. Woodwind figures, sometimes solo, muse as if from a distance. The pace remains slow, the tone almost muffled: another dream, its unreality heightened by the implication of gender ambiguity.

Almost single-handedly, Benjamin Britten revived the tradition of British opera in the 20th century. Not long after World War II, *Peter Grimes* was premiered in London to enormous acclaim. The title character was portrayed by Britten's life partner, tenor Peter Pears, who also created Captain Vere in *Billy Budd* and Aschenbach in *Death in Venice*. The long Britten-Pears collaboration is so well known that we tend to forget the composer's close artistic associations with other performers, including cellist Mstislav Rostropovich and mezzo-soprano Janet Baker. One of his last major works was for Baker: the cantata "Phaedra," which can be heard as a one-character miniature opera. Britten, however, conceived of it as a cantata in the tradition of Handel: a composer of whose works Baker had been a distinguished interpreter. The Baroque connection in "Phaedra" is emphasized by the use of a harpsichord-and-cello continuo part; the orchestra consists only of strings and percussion.

For his text, Britten selected passages from Robert Lowell's English translation of the 17th-century French tragedian Jean Racine's *Phèdre*. Like "Andromache's Farewell," it takes us back to Greek mythology, in this case to one of its most tortured figures: a woman who descends from obsession to sin, thence to madness and suicide. Like so many of Britten's protagonists, including Peter Grimes and Billy Budd, Phaedra is a tormented outsider in the society that surrounds her. In the mythological story, she is literally an outsider: a princess of the vanquished royal family of Crete, whom the conquering hero Theseus marries and brings to his kingdom

of Athens. Theseus had earlier loved and abandoned Phaedra's sister, Ariadne. His subsequent relationship with Hippolyta, queen of the warrior Amazons, produced a son, Hippolytus, now grown into a heroic, almost godlike young man. Phaedra, now queen of Athens and Hippolytus's stepmother, cannot keep her eyes or mind off him. One part of her is horrified at this impulse toward a love at best adulterous and at worst incestuous, yet she cannot help herself. Her obsession isolates her completely, making her fearful, scheming, secretive.

Racine's five-act drama lays out the fateful tale as it came down from ancient times. Her advances to Hippolytus rejected, Phaedra is urged by her servant and companion, Oenone, to accuse the boy of rape. Theseus believes the charge and orders his son exiled. Hippolytus is killed by a sea monster, Oenone commits suicide, and Phaedra is forced to reveal her role in the tragedy. She confesses her crimes to Theseus after taking poison.

To reduce this long progression of sin and betrayal to a coherent and brief narrative, Britten selected passages from various scenes of the Lowell translation to condense the story into a vivid vignette of horror. The percussive sounds of harpsichord, tympani, and cymbal emphasize Phaedra's frenzy, guilt, and eventual insanity. An important motive of wide descending intervals is presented by the violins in the opening measures. Then we hear the first of many passionate, unmelodic vocal lines leaping and quivering on Phaedra's first words: "In May, in brilliant Athens, on my marriage day, I turned aside for shelter from the smile of Theseus. Death was frowning in an aisle — Hippolytus! I saw his face turned white!" The instrumental accompaniment is spare as Phaedra acknowledges her guilty love and recalls that the goddess of love, Aphrodite, had been an enemy of her mother; is the goddess taking more revenge? And if so, against whom? For Phaedra, Hippolytus, and Theseus can all be regarded as victims.

This opening prologue and recitative are followed by a Presto aria in which Phaedra directly addresses Hippolytus. Intense, agitated strings reinforce the passion of her outpouring, which reaches a climax on the words "I love you!" She recounts how she pretended to hate Hippolytus so Theseus would not guess the truth, but "I ached for you no less."

An instrumental interlude begins with soft string motives succeeded by ominous tappings from tympani and percussion. Another recitative begins, supported by the harpsichord-cello continuo, harking back to Baroque tradition. Now Phaedra is addressing Oenone. How is she to face her husband, knowing how she feels, fearful that Hippolytus will accuse her? A striking forte harpsichord figure emphasizes her desire to die: "Death to the unhappy's no catastrophe."

The final Adagio is introduced by a string passage that begins low and mounts to the upper registers via slow half steps and whole steps in a slow metrical pattern. The ominous effect is both shattered and enhanced by the rapid descending figure that leads to Phaedra's final speech to Theseus: "My time's too short, your highness...". Rapid string figurations comment on Phaedra's last words, with which she absolves Hippolytus and then takes blame for the whole tragedy. The instrumental texture once again becomes slow-moving and soft as the queen reveals she has taken "Medea's poison" (a reference to the sorceress who appears mainly in the story of Jason and the Argonauts but who also played a part in the story of the ruling house of Athens). Soft strings and occasional percussion support the voice as Phaedra experiences "a cold composure I have never known" and waits for her eyes to "give up the light." She declares, "I stand alone" — as indeed she has since the start of the drama. She is now doubly isolated in death, as she sees the day her eyes have "soiled resume its purity." The opening motive returns via solo violin and leads to an ending soft to the point of near-inaudibility.

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1 Barber: **Andromache's Farewell**

So you must die, my son,
my best-beloved, my own,
by savage hands and leave
your Mother comfortless.
Hector's valiant spirit, shield of thousands,
is death to his own son.

My wedding day! it was my sorrow
that day I came to Hector's house
to bear my son. He was to be
Lord of all Asia and not for Greeks to slaughter.

My boy, you are weeping.
Do you know then what awaits you?
Why do you hold me so?
clutch at my dress? (a small bird
seeking shelter under my wing.)
Hector cannot come back
with his brave spear to save you.
He cannot come from the grave
nor any of his princes.

Instead, from the height, flung down! oh pitiless!
head foremost! falling! falling!...
Thus will your life end.

Oh dearest embrace, sweet breathing of your body,
Was it for nothing that I nursed you, that I suffered?
consumed my heart with cares, all for nothing?

Now, and never again, kiss your Mother.
Come close, embrace me, who gave you life.
Put your arms around me, your mouth on mine...
And then no more.

You Greeks, contrivers of such savagery.
Why must you kill this guiltless child?

Helen! You they call daughter of God,
I say you are the spawn of many fathers:
malevolence, murder, hate, destruction —
all the evils that afflict the earth.
God curse you, Helen, for those eyes that brought
hideous carnage to the fair fields of Troy.

Take him then, take him away, break his body on the rocks;
Cast him down, eat his flesh if that is your desire.
Now the Gods have destroyed us utterly,
And I can no longer conceal my child from death. (She relinquishes Astyanax.)

Hide my head in shame:
Cast me in the ship,
as to that marriage bed
across the grave of my own son I come!

Berlioz: **La mort de Cléopâtre**

2 *C'en est donc fait! ma honte est assurée.*
Veuve d'Antoine et veuve de César,
Au pouvoir d'Octave livrée,
Je n'ai pu captiver son farouche regard.
J'étais vaincue et suis déshonorée.
En vain, pour ranimer l'éclat de mes attraits,
J'ai profané le deuil d'un funeste veuvage;
En vain de l'art épuisant les secrets,
J'ai caché sous des fleurs les fers de l'escalavage;
Rien n'a pu du vainqueur désarmer les décrets.
A ses pieds j'ai traîné mes grandeurs opprimées.
Mes pleurs mêmes ont coulé sur ses mains répandus.
Et la fille des Ptolémées
A subi l'affront des refus.

3 *Ah! qu'ils sont loin ces jours,*
Ces jours tourment de ma mémoire,
Où sur le sein des mers, comparable à Vénus
D'Antoine et de César réfléchissant la gloire.
J'apparus triomphante aux rives du Cydnus!

Actium m'a livrée au vainqueur qui me brave;
Mon sceptre, mes trésors ont passé dans ses mains;

Ma beauté me restait et les mépris d'Octave
Pour me vaincre ont fait plus que le fer des Romains.

The Death of Cleopatra

2 So, then, my shame is complete,
Widow of Anthony and widow of Caesar
Delivered into the power of Octavius,
I have not been able to captivate his cruel gaze.
Already vanquished, I am now dishonored.
To renew the splendor of my charm,
In vain have I profaned my tragic widowhood;
I have used in vain all secrets known to art,
And hidden beneath flowers the iron bonds of my enslavement;
Nothing has succeeded in weakening the conqueror's degrees.
I have dragged my broken grandeur at his feet.
My very tears ran spreading upon his hands.
And the daughter of the Ptolemies
Has suffered the insult of refusal.

3 Ah! how distant are those days
Those days which plague my memory,
When on the bosom of the waves, comparable to Venus,
Reflecting the glory of Anthony and of Caesar,
I stood in triumph on the shores of Cydnus!

Actium delivered me into the power of the defiant victor;
My scepter, my treasure passed into his hands;

My beauty remained and Octavius' scorn
Did more to defeat me than the Roman sword.

Ah! qu'ils sont loin ces jours, etc...
En vain de l'art épuisant les secrets, etc....

...Mes pleurs mêmes ont coulé sur ses mains répandus.
J'ai subi l'affront des refus.
Moi! qui sein des mers, comparable à Vénus,
M'élançais triomphante aux rives du Cydnus.

Au comble des revers, qu'aurais-je encor à craindre?
Reine coupable, que dis-tu!

Du destin qui m'accable est-ce à moi de me plaindrè?
Ai-je pour l'excuser les droits de la vertu?
J'ai d'un époux déshonoré la vie.
C'est par moi qu'aux Romains l'Egypte est asservie.
Et que d'Isis l'ancien culte est détruit
Quel asile chercher! Sans parents! Sans patrie!
Il n'en est plus pour moi que l'éternelle nuit!

4 ***Méditation***
Grands Pharaons, nobles Lagides,
Verrez-vous entrer sans courroux,
Pour dormir dans vos pyramides,
Une reine indigne de voux?

Ah! how distant are those days, etc....
I have used in vain all secrets, etc....

...My very tears ran spreading upon his hands.
I have suffered the insult of refusal.
I, who from the bosom of the waves, comparable to Venus,
Sprang in triumph upon the shores of Cydnus.

Overwhelmed with misfortunes, what is left for me to fear?
Gulit-laden queen, what hast thou to say?

Have I the right to complain of my overwhelming fate?
Have I in excuse the privileges of virtue?
I was the dishonor of my spouse.
Because of me, Egypt is enslaved by Rome
And the ancient cult of Isis is destroyed.
Whither shall I turn? Without family! Without homeland!
There is nothing more for me than the dark of eternity!

4 **Meditation**
Mighty Pharaohs, noble Lagides,
Will you without wrath watch her enter,
To rest in your pyramids,
A queen unworthy of you?

5 *Non! de vos demeures funèbres*
Je profanerais la splendeur.
Rois, encor au sein des ténèbres.
Vous me fuiriez avec horreur.

Du destin qui m'accable est-ce à moi de me plaindre?
Ai-je pour l'accuser, ai-je le droit de la vertu?
Par moi nos Dieux ont fui d'Alexandrie,
D'Isis le culte est détruit.

Grands Pharaons, nobles Lagides,
Vous me fuiriez avec horreur.
Du destin qui m'accable est-ce à moi de me plaindre?
Ai-je pour l'accuser, ai-je le droit de la vertu?
Grands Pharaons, etc...

Non, j'ai d'un époux déshonoré la vie.
Sa cendre est sous mes yeux, son ombre me poursuit.
C'est par moi qu'aux Romains l'Egypte est asservie.
Par moi nos Dieux ont fui les murs d'Alexandrie,

Et d'Isis le culte est détruit.
Osiris proscrit ma couronne.
A Typhon je livre mes jours!
Contre l'horreur qui m'environne,
Un vil reptile est mon recours.

Dieux du Nil, vous m'avez trahie!
Octave m'attend à son char.
Cléopâtre en quittant la vie
Redevient digne de César!

5 No! I should profane the splendor
Of your last resting-place
O Kings, even amidst those shades
You would fly from me in horror.

Have I the right to complain of my overwhelming fate?
Have I, to accuse my lot, the privilege of virtue?
Because of me our gods fled from Alexandria.
And the cult of Isis is destroyed.

Mighty Pharaohs, noble Lagides,
You would fly from me in horror.
Have I the right to complain of my overwhelming fate?
Have I, to accuse my lot, the privilege of virtue?
Mighty Pharaohs, etc....

No, I was the dishonor of my spouse.
His ashes are before my gaze, his shade pursues me.
It is because of me that Egypt is enslaved by Rome.
Because of me that our gods have deserted the walls of Alexandria,
And the cult of Isis is destroyed.
Osiris banished my reign.
To Typhon I give up my life!
In the face of the horror which hems me in,
A vile reptile is my resort.

Gods of the Nile, you have betrayed me!
Octavius awaits me at his chariot.
Cleopatra by her death
Is once more worthy of Caesar!

Ravel: **Shéhérazade**

6 ***Asie***

Asie, Asie, Asie,
Vieux pays merveilleux des contes de nourrice
Où dort la fantaisie comme une impératrice,
En sa forêt tout emplie de mystère.

Asie, je voudrais m'en aller avec la goëlette
Qui se berce ce soir dans le port
Mystérieuse et solitaire,
Et qui déploie enfin ses voiles violettes
Comme un immense oiseau de nuit dans le ciel d'or.
Je voudrais m'en aller vers des îles de fleurs,
En écoutant chanter la mer perverse
Sur un vieux rythme ensorceleur.

Je voudrais voir Damas et les villes de Perse
Avec les minarets légers dans l'air.
Je voudrais voir de beaux turbans de soie
Sur des visages noirs aux dents claires;

Je voudrais voir des yeux sombres d'amour
Et des prunelles brillantes de joie
Et des paux jaunes comme des oranges;
Je voudrais voir des vêtements de velours
Et des habits à longues franges.

Je voudrais voir des calumets entre des bouches
Tout entourées de barbe blanche;
Je voudrais voir d'âpres marchands aux regards louches,
Et des cadis, et des vizirs
Qui du seul mouvement de leur doigt qui se penche
Accordent vie ou mort au gré de leur désir.

6 **Asia**

Asia, Asia, Asia!
Ancient, marvelous lands of nursery tales
Where imagination sleeps like an empress
In her forest, surrounded in mystery.

Asia: I should like to leave with the schooner
Rocking tonight in the habor,
Mysterious and alone,
And at last unfurling purple sails
Like an huge night bird in the golden sky.

I should like to leave for the flower islands
Listening to the perverse ocean sing
To an old, bewitching rhythm.

I should like to see Damascus and the cities of Persia
With light minarets in the air.
I should like to see beautiful silk turbans
Over dark faces with shining teeth;

I should like to see eyes darkened with love
And pupils shining with joy
Against skins golden as oranges;
I should like to see velvet clothes
And robes with long fringes.

I should like to see pipes in mouths
Surrounded by white beards;
I should like to see grasping merchants with shady looks,
And cadis and viziers,
Who with a mere crook of the finger
Dispense life or death at will.

Je voudrais voir la Perse, et l'Inde, et puis la Chine,
Les mandarins ventrus sous les ombrelles,
Et les princesses aux mains fines,
Et les lettrés qui se querellent
Sur la poésie et sur la beauté;

Je voudrais m'attarder au palais enchanté
Et comme un voyageur étranger
Contemple à loisir des paysages peints
Sur des étoffes en des cadres de sapin,
Avec un personnage au milieu d'un verger;

Je voudrais voir des assassins souriants
Du bourreau qui coupe un cou d'innocent
Avec son grand sabre courbé d'Orient.

Je voudrais voir des pauvres et des reines;
Je voudrais voir des roses et du sang;
Je voudrais voir mourir d'amour ou bien de haine.

Et puis m'en revenir plus tard
Narrer mon aventure aux curieux de rêves
En élevant comme Sindbad ma vieille tasse arabe
De temps en temps jusqu'à mes lèvres
Pour interrompre le conte avec art. . . .

I should like to see Persia, and India, and then China,
Pot-bellied mandarins under umbrellas,
And princesses of slender hands
And scholars arguing
Over poetry and beauty;

I should like to linger in the enchanted palace
And, like a foreign traveller,
Contemplate at leisure painted landscapes
On fabrics in pine-wood frames
With a figure in the middle of an orchard;

I should like to see assassins smiling
As the executioner cuts off an innocent head
With his great curved oriental saber.

I should like to see paupers and queens;
I should like to see roses and blood;
I should like to see dying of love or else of hate.

And then return
To recount my adventures to those curious of dreams,
Raising, like Sinbad, my old Arab cup
From time to time to my lips
To interrupt the tale, artfully. . . .

7 ***La flûte enchantée***

L'ombre est douce et mon maître dort
Coiffé d'un bonnet conique de soie
Et son long nez jaune en sa barbe blanche.

Mais moi, je suis éveillée encor
Et j'écoute au dehors
Une chanson de flûte où s'épanche
Tour à tour la tristesse ou la joie.

Un air tour à tour langoureux ou frivole
Que mon amoureux chéri joue,

Et quand je m'approche de la croisée
Il me semble que chaque note s'envole
De la flûte vers ma joue
Comme un mystérieux baiser.

8 ***L'indifférent***

Tes yeux sont doux comme ceux d'une fille,
Jeune étranger,
Et la courbe fine
De ton beau visage de duvet ombragé
Est plus séduisante encor de ligne.

Ta lèvre chante sur le pas de ma porte
Une langue inconnue et charmante
Comme une musique fausse. . .
Entre!
Et que mon vin te réconforte . . .

Mais non, tu passes
Et de mon seuil je te vois t'éloigner
Me faisant un dernier geste avec grâce,
Et la hanche légèrement ployée
Par ta démarche féminine et lasse. . . .

7 **The Enchanted Flute**

The shadows are gentle, and my master sleeps
Under his conical silk night cap
And his long yellow nose in his white beard.

But I am still awake
And I am listening
To a flute-song outside, from which pours,
By turns, sadness and joy.

A song by turns langorous or merry
That my dear love plays,

And when I go to the window
It seems to me that each note flies
From the flute to my cheek
Like a myterious kiss.

8 **The Indifferent One**

Your eyes are gentle as a girl's,
Young stranger,
And the delicate curve
Of your beautiful face, shadowed with down,
Is yet more seductive of contour.

On my doorstep your lips sing
An unknown and charming language
Like music out of tune . . .
Enter!
And let my wine refresh you . . .

But no, you pass,
And from my doorsill I see you move away
Making me a last gracious gesture,
And your hips lightly swing
In your languid, feminine gait. . . .

9 Britten: **Phaedra**

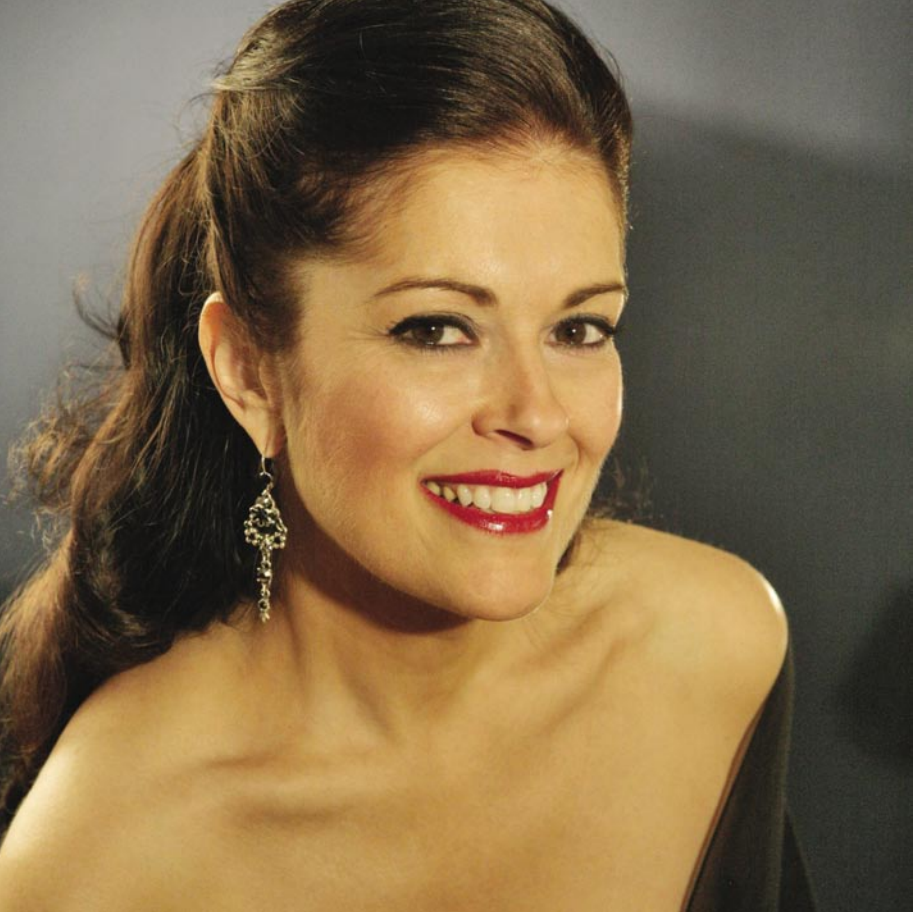
PROLOGUE: In May, in brilliant Athens, on my marriage day, I turned aside for shelter from the smile of Theseus. Death was frowning in an aisle — Hippolytus! I saw his face, turned white!

RECITATIVE: My lost and dazzled eyes saw only night, capricious burnings flickered through my bleak abandoned flesh. I could not breathe or speak. I faced my flaming executioner, Aphrodite, my mother's murderer! [A curse by Poseidon, enforced by Aphrodite, the goddess of love, lust and beauty, upon Pasiphaë, Phaedra's mother, caused her to mate with a sacred bull and give birth to the Minotaur, which was slain by Theseus.] I tried to calm her wrath by flowers and praise, I built her a temple, fretted months and days on decoration. Alas, my hungry open mouth, thirsting with adoration, tasted drouth — Venus resigned her altar to my new lord.

PRESTO *(to Hippolytus)*: You monster! You understood me too well! Why do you hang there, speechless, petrified, polite! My mind whirls. What have I to hide? Phaedra in all her madness stands before you. I love you! Fool, I love you, I adore you! Do not imagine that my mind approved my first defection, Prince, or that I loved your youth light-heartedly, and fed my treason with cowardly compliance, till I lost my reason. Alas, my violence to resist you made my face inhuman, hateful. I was afraid to kiss my husband lest I love his son. I made you fear me (this was easily done); you loathed me more, I ached for you no less. Misfortune magnified your loveliness. The wife of Theseus loves Hippolytus! See, Prince! Look, this monster, ravenous for her execution, will not flinch. I want your sword's spasmodic final inch.

RECITATIVE *(to Oenone)*: Oh Gods of wrath, how far I've travelled on my dangerous path! I go to meet my husband; at his side will stand Hippolytus. How shall I hide my thick adulterous passion for this youth, who has rejected me, and knows the truth? Will he not draw his sword and strike me dead? Suppose he spares me? What if nothing's said? Can I kiss Theseus with dissembled poise? The very dust rises to disabuse my husband — to defame me and accuse! Oenone, I want to die. Death will give me freedom; oh it's nothing not to live; death to the unhappy's no catastrophe!

ADAGIO *(to Theseus)*: My time's too short, your highness. It was I, who lusted for your son with my hot eye. The flames of Aphrodite maddened me. Then Oenone's tears troubled my mind; she played upon my fears, until her pleading forced me to declare I loved your son. Theseus, I stand before you to absolve your noble son. Sire, only this resolve upheld me, and made me throw down my knife. I've chosen a slower way to end my life — Medea's poison; chills already dart along my boiling veins and squeeze my heart. A cold composure I have never known gives me a moment's poise. I stand alone and seem to see my outraged husband fade and waver into death's dissolving shade. My eyes at last give up their light, and see the day they've soiled resume its purity.



About Jennifer Larmore

A leading exponent of the coloratura roles of the Baroque and bel canto eras, the outstanding American mezzo-soprano Jennifer Larmore has also won widespread acclaim for her performances of Romantic and Contemporary repertoire.

Originally from Atlanta, Ms. Larmore studied at the Westminster Choir College of Princeton, New Jersey, and then privately with John Bullock and Regina Resnik. In 1986, she made her professional debut in the Opera de Nice's production of Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*. During the same period, Ms. Larmore sang her first Rosina in the *Barber of Seville* in Strasbourg. Rosina would become her signature role — one she has now performed over five hundred times.

Ms. Larmore's vocal talents, energetic acting, and natural beauty quickly established her as an emerging star, as she went on to perform dozens of leading roles with important European houses including the major theaters of Paris, Vienna, London, Edinburgh, Rome, Berlin, Madrid, Barcelona, Lisbon, Brussels, Amsterdam, Milan, and Salzburg.

In 1994, Ms. Larmore returned to the United States in a triumphant Carnegie Hall appearance as Romeo in Bellini's *I Capuletti e I Montecchi*. She followed this success by winning the prestigious Richard Tucker Award and making her Metropolitan Opera debut as Rosina in 1995. Since then, Ms. Larmore has been a regular attraction at the Met, singing leading roles in numerous operas including Handel's *Giulio Cesare*; Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Cenerentola*, and *l'Italiana in Algeri*; Offenbach's *Les contes d'Hoffmann*; Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*; Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*; and the world premiere of Tobias Picker's *An American Tragedy*.

With her frequent collaborator, pianist Antoine Palloc, she has performed recitals in Amsterdam, Paris, Madrid, Hong Kong, Seoul, Tokyo, Vienna, London, San Juan, Prague, Melbourne, Brussels, Berlin, Rio de Janeiro, Lisbon, Sao Paolo, Athens, and Copenhagen, as well as all the major American venues.

Symphonic repertoire plays a large role in Ms. Larmore's career. Most notable in her repertoire are the works of Mahler, Schoenberg, Mozart, de Falla, Debussy, Berlioz, and

Barber. She has performed with major orchestras around the world, collaborating with leading conductors including Riccardo Muti, Jesús López-Cobos, Leonard Bernstein, Donald Runnicles, Giuseppi Sinopoli, Kurt Masur, Christoph von Dohnányi, René Jacobs, Charles Mackerras, Jean-Christophe Spinosi, Marco Guidarini, Carlos Kalmar, Julius Rudel, Daniel Barenboim, Eve Queler, Richard Bonynge, Lorin Maazel, Seiji Ozawa, and many others.

Ms. Larmore has recorded over seventy CDs for the Teldec, RCA, Harmonia Mundi, Deutsch Grammophon, Arabesque, Opera Rara, Bayer, Naïve, Chandos, and VAI labels, making her the most recorded mezzo-soprano of all time. Her *Giulio Cesare* on Harmonia Mundi received the 1992 Gramophone Award in the Baroque Vocal category. She has earned seven Grammy nominations over the years for: *L'Etoile*, a collection of French opera arias; *Call Me Mister*, a celebration of mezzo-soprano "trouser" roles; *Amore per Rossini*, a trove of Rossini rarities, some never before recorded; *My Native Land*, a gathering of songs by American composers; *Where Shall I Fly*, featuring Handel and Mozart arias; *Bravura Diva*, a collection of rare bel canto masterworks; *Jennifer Larmore in Performance*, a companion CD to the popular DVD from Video Artists International (VAI); *Jennifer Larmore, A Portrait*, a collection of early works from the Renaissance and Baroque periods; and *Born In Atlanta*, a CD of varied operatic and concert selections released to commemorate Ms. Larmore's appearance at the Closing Ceremonies of the 1996 Atlanta Olympic games. Ms. Larmore's many operatic recordings include the title roles in Bizet's *Carmen*; Rossini's *Elisabetta*, *Regina d'Inghilterra*, *La Cenerentola, L'Italiana in Algeri*, and *Bianca e Falliero*; Gluck's *Orphée*; Handel's *Giulio Cesare*; Paer's *Sofanisba*; and Bellini's *I Capuletti e I Montecchi*.

In 2002, Ms. Larmore was endowed with Knighthood by the French Government, gaining the title "Chevalier des arts et des lettres" in recognition of her contributions to the world of music.

In her humanitarian efforts, Ms. Larmore's charity of choice has been the American Fund for UNICEF. Her desire is to raise awareness of the plight of underprivileged children, and she often speaks and sings for this worthy cause. In addition to her many activities, travels, performances, and causes, Jennifer Larmore is currently working on books designed to help bring a wider public to the love of opera.

About Carlos Kalmar

Carlos Kalmar is the principal conductor of Chicago's Grant Park Music Festival and music director of the Oregon Symphony. Mr. Kalmar was born in Montevideo, Uruguay, to Austrian parents. He studied conducting with Karl Österreicher at the College for Music in Vienna, and won First Prize at the Hans Swarowsky Conducting Competition in Vienna in June 1984. From 1987 to 1991 he was chief conductor of the Hamburg Symphony Orchestra, and general music director and chief conductor of the Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra between 1991 and 1995. From 1996 through 2000, Carlos Kalmar was the general music director of the Opera House and Philharmonic Orchestra in Dessau, Germany. Between 2000 and 2003, he was principal conductor and artistic director of the Tonkünstler Orchestra in Vienna.

Upcoming engagements include returns to the Saint Louis, Dallas, Baltimore, and Vancouver Symphonies; the Residente Orchestre in the Netherlands; Czech Philharmonic; and Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and debut concerts with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Recent engagements in North America have included subscription concerts with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Houston Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony, and the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa. Kalmar's international conducting appearances have included the Berlin Radio Symphony, National Orchestra of Spain, Bournemouth Symphony, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Hamburg State Opera, Vienna State Opera, and Zurich Opera.

This is Carlos Kalmar's sixth recording for Cedille Records. His recordings for other labels include CDs with the Jeunesse Musicales World Orchestra (Alban Gerhardt, cello soloist) and Vienna's Tonkünstler Orchestra for Austrian National Radio.

About The Grant Park Orchestra

The Grant Park Orchestra is the resident orchestra of the Grant Park Music Festival, which is dedicated to providing the public with free, high-quality orchestral performances through the presentation of classical-music concerts. In addition to performing an array of classical repertoire, the Grant Park Orchestra is renowned for its focus on contemporary American music.

Founded by the Chicago Park District in 1935 and co-presented by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and the Grant Park Orchestral Association since 2001, the Festival is the nation's only remaining free, municipally funded outdoor classical music series of its kind. The Grant Park Music Festival runs for ten consecutive weeks each summer.

The Grant Park Orchestra was created in 1943 and Nicolai Malko was named the first principal conductor in 1945, a post he held through 1956. Since then, other prestigious conductors have held the position, including Irwin Hoffman, Leonard Slatkin, David Zinman, Zdnek Macal, and Hugh Wolff. In October 1999, Carlos Kalmar was named the Festival's newest principal conductor. In 2002, Christopher Bell was installed as the Festival's chorus director.

In 2004, the Festival moved to its new home, the Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park, a state-of-the-art venue designed by internationally renowned architect Frank Gehry with sound system designed by the Talaske Group of Oak Park, Illinois. This is the Grant Park Orchestra's fifth recording for Cedille Records.

Also with Carlos Kalmar and the Grant Park Orchestra

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