



BIRDS

- 1 **ENRIQUE GRANADOS** (1867–1916)
Quejas, o la Maja y el Ruiseñor *
(from *Goyescas*, o *Los Majos enamorados*, 1915)
- 2 **JACQUES OFFENBACH** (1819–1880)
Les Oiseaux dans la charmille
(from *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, 1880)
- 3 **LÉO DELIBES** (1836–1891)
Le Rossignol
(1885, Arr. by Andreas Gies, Flute solo by Ary van Leeuwen)
- 4 **FÉLICIEN DAVID** (1810–1876)
Charmant oiseau
(from *La Perle du Brésil*, 1851)
- 5 **CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS** (1835–1921)
Le Rossignol et la rose
(from *Parysatis*, 1901)
- 6 **EVA DELL'ACQUA** (1856–1930)
Villanelle (1893, Orch. by Fritz Ernaldy)
- 7 **CHARLES GOUNOD** (1818–1893)
O légère hirondelle
(from *Mireille*, 1864)
- 8 **FRANZ GROTHE** (1908–1982)
Lied der Nachtigall **
(from the motion picture *Die schwedische Nachtigall*, 1941,
Arr. by Walter Borchert)
- 9 **WALTER BRAUNFELS** (1882–1954)
Ach, ach, ach! Liebwerte Freunde, begrüßt! ***
(from *Die Vögel*, Op. 30, 1919)

- 10 **NIKOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV** (1844–1908)
Plenivshis' rozoj, solovej
(Пленившись розой, соловей/
The Nightingale Enslaved by the Rose, 1866)
- 11 **ALEXANDER ALYABYEV** (1787–1851)
Solovej (Соловей/The Nightingale, 1826,
Orch. by Mikhail Glinka & Andreas Gies, edited by Andreas Gies)
- 12 **VICTOR HERBERT** (1859–1924)
The Nightingale and the Star
(from *Mlle Modiste*, 1905, Arr. by Andreas Gies)
- 13 **HENRY BISHOP** (1787–1856)
Lo! Here the Gentle Lark
(from *The Comedy of Errors*, 1819, edited by Andreas Gies)
- 14 **VINCENZO DE CRESCENZO** (1875–1964)
Rondine al nido
(1926, Arr. by Andreas Gies)

SERENA SÁENZ *Soprano*

TRANSYLVANIA STATE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

(Filarmonica de Stat „Transilvania“)

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Solo Flute: **BALÁZS VINCZE**

Conducted by **CLELIA CAFIERO**

Répétiteur & Coach: **MATTHIAS SAMUIL**

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I am truly grateful to be able to present my debut album to you. This is a project that is very close to my heart, inspired by my fascination with how the soprano voice can mimic the delicate sounds of songbirds. For me, this album is not just about singing but about finding beauty in the way a voice can connect to nature's melodies.

The pieces I have chosen are very special. They are a mix of bravura and lyrical moments, designed to showcase the range and flexibility of the voice. With the flute accompanying me in various pieces, we've tried to capture the essence of different bird calls, mainly the nightingale, bringing them to life in a vibrant way. I also love the rich mix of languages, which offers a glimpse into how composers from different traditions – Russia, Germany, England, France, Italy, and Spain – each interpreted the idea of birdsong.

I hope that when you listen to this album, it will make you feel as though you are traveling through the skies, discovering new soundscapes, giving you a light and free sensation through the sheer beauty of music.

This album was recorded in June 2024 in Cluj, Transylvania, a place that made the music even more magical. I had the pleasure of having my mother by my side as my biggest supporter. My heartfelt thanks to her as well as to the wonderful team at San Francisco Classical Recording Company, Job and Christina, for putting their trust in me and giving me this opportunity. I am extremely grateful to Jean-Marie for his meticulous work, and to my wonderful coach Matthias Samuil for his endless patience and support.

Thank you for being part of this journey with me!

Serena Sáenz

Estoy profundamente agradecida y me llena de alegría presentar mi primer álbum. Es un proyecto muy cercano a mi corazón, inspirado por la fascinación de cómo la voz de soprano puede imitar los delicados sonidos de los pájaros cantores. Para mí, este álbum no es sólo sobre el canto, sino sobre cómo encontrar la belleza cuando la voz humana conecta con las melodías de la naturaleza.

Las piezas elegidas son muy especiales; se combinan momentos de gran virtuosismo con el lirismo, diseñados para mostrar el rango y la flexibilidad de la voz. Con el sutil acompañamiento de la flauta hemos tratado de capturar la esencia de los sonidos de las diferentes aves canoras, especialmente el ruiseñor, vibrando con ellos. Me gusta que la selección contiene una amplia riqueza de idiomas, que nos ofrece una visión de cómo compositores de distintas tradiciones – Rusia, Alemania, Inglaterra, Francia, Italia, España – han interpretado la idea del canto de los pájaros.

Confío en que, al escuchar estas piezas, puedan viajar por los cielos, descubriendo nuevos paisajes sonoros y experimentar la sensación de ligereza y libertad que proporciona la belleza de la música.

Este álbum fue grabado en junio de 2024 en Cluj, Transilvania, un lugar que también aportó su magia a este trabajo musical. Tuve la inmensa alegría de contar con mi madre a mi lado como mi mayor apoyo, lo que le agradezco desde mi corazón. Doy las gracias al maravilloso equipo de San Francisco Classical Recording Company, Job y Christina, por confiar en mí y darme esta oportunidad. Estoy profundamente agradecida a Jean-Marie por su minucioso trabajo, y a mi maravilloso maestro repetidor Matthias Samuil por su infinita paciencia y apoyo.

Gracias a todos por ser parte de este precioso viaje!

Serena Sáenz





Ich bin sehr dankbar, dass ich Ihnen mein Debütalbum präsentieren kann. Es ist ein Projekt, das mir sehr am Herzen liegt und das von meiner Faszination dafür inspiriert wurde, wie die Sopranstimme die zarten Klänge von Singvögeln nachahmen kann. Für mich geht es bei diesem Album nicht nur um das Singen, sondern darum, die Schönheit darin zu finden, wie sich eine Stimme mit den Melodien der Natur verbinden kann.

Die Stücke, die ich ausgewählt habe, sind eine Mischung aus virtuosen und lyrischen Momenten, die die Bandbreite und Flexibilität der Stimme zur Geltung bringen sollen. Mit der Flöte, die mich in verschiedenen Stücken begleitet, haben wir versucht, die Essenz verschiedener Vogelstimmen, vor allem der Nachtigall, einzufangen und sie auf lebendige Art und Weise zum Leben zu erwecken. Mir gefällt auch die große Vielfalt an Sprachen, die uns Einblicke bietet, wie Komponisten aus verschiedenen Traditionen – Russland, Deutschland, England, Frankreich, Italien und Spanien – die Idee des Vogelgesangs interpretiert haben.

Ich hoffe, dass Sie beim Hören dieses Albums durch die Lüfte schweben, neue Klanglandschaften entdecken und das Gefühl von Leichtigkeit und Freiheit erleben können, das die Schönheit der Musik vermittelt.

Wir haben das Album im Juni 2024 in Cluj, Transsilvanien/Siebenbürgen, aufgenommen, ein Ort, der die Magie der Musik noch verstärkt hat. Ich hatte dabei das Vergnügen, meine Mutter als größte Unterstützerin an meiner Seite zu haben. Ich danke ihr von ganzem Herzen, ebenso wie dem wunderbaren Team der San Francisco Classical Recording Company, Job und Christina, die mir ihr Vertrauen geschenkt und mir diese Chance gegeben haben. Ich bin Jean-Marie sehr dankbar für seine akribische Arbeit und meinem wunderbaren Coach Matthias Samuil für seine unendliche Geduld und Unterstützung.

Vielen Dank, dass Sie mich auf dieser wunderbaren Reise begleiten!

Serena Sáenz

Birdsong in opera and art song: a musical homage to nature

When songbirds such as swallows or skylarks fly through the air – filling it with trills, staccati and glissandi – most people, and not just the musically-inclined, can sense that birdsong seems to represent the archetype, perhaps even the most primal form of human singing. Thus, it will come as no surprise that since the very earliest days of opera and the art song many composers and musicians have been inspired by the singing of birds and by nature in general. Among all the various guises in which nature is represented through music, birdsong holds a very special place. With its melodiousness and seemingly endless variety of ornamentation and timbres, birdsong has often been used to symbolize beauty, freedom, purity, love and transcendence. The nightingale in particular, whose song is often used in music as a metaphor for perfect harmony with nature, has inspired countless composers. Its ability to produce complex melodies has often led to comparisons with the human voice. Even in ancient cultures, the song of the nightingale was seen as a symbol for infinite creativity and melancholic moments in nature. This symbolism is still extant in opera to this day: the nightingale is often invoked as the embodiment of longing and romantic ideals, while its song expresses the most profound human feelings in all their nuance and complexity.

This also applies to this debut CD by the soprano Serena Sáenz, whose selection of songs focusses on the musical representation of birdsong in opera arias with some excursions into the field of art song. She takes us on a journey through the centuries, combining diverse music traditions and cultures and seducing the listener in a world of divine universal beauty.

The opening track is Enrique Granados' (1867–1916) *Quejas, o la Maja y el Ruiseñor* from his opera *Goyescas*, which was composed in 1915. In this aria, the lament of the female protagonist Rosario blends with the tender, melancholy song of the nightingale. Granados unites the timbres of the human voice and the sounds of nature to create a poetic whole, adding the evocative coloration of Spain.

Similarly, in Léo Delibes' (1836–1891) marvellous nightingale aria *Le Rossignol* (1885), we hear the song of the virtuoso songbird interpreted as a delicately ornamented solo for flute. The delicate soprano coloratura and the flute engage in a harmonious dialogue that beautifully captures the love of nature so typical of French romantic compositions.

Jacques Offenbach's (1819–1880) sprightly coloratura aria *Les Oiseaux dans la charmille* from *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (1880) transports us to a completely different world. In this piece, the song of birds manifests as an expression of playful joie de vivre and carefree, flirtatious levity. Offenbach infuses this composition with his typical humour, depicting the excited chatter of songbirds in a grove of hornbeams.

Certainly one of the highlights of this recording is Félicien David's (1810–1876) *Charmant oiseau* from his rarely performed opera *La Perle du Brésil* (1851). Of particular note is the combination of oriental sonorities and European classical opera traditions, which is typical of David, who, incidentally, enjoyed a close artistic relationship with Jacques Offenbach. In this piece, the song of the nightingale symbolises exoticism and seduction, artfully bridging the gap between different cultures.

No less of a musical jewel is *Villanelle* (1893) written by the Italo-Flemish composer and soprano Eva Dell'Acqua (1856–1930). It possesses a captivating, dance-like quality, and demands masterful vocal control from the interpreter in order to imitate the complex ornamentation of birdsong. Of course, Serena Sáenz achieves this with consummate ease and sparkling brilliance.

Works from the 20th century are also included: for example, Franz Grothe's (1908–1982) poetic and symbolic *Song of the Nightingale* (1941) from the film *The Swedish Nightingale*, or Walter Braunfels' (1882–1954) *Ach, ach, ach! Liebwerte Freunde, begrüßt!* (from *The Birds*, 1919), which imparts an impressive dramatic depth to the carefully composed singing voices, thus placing them in the context of a broader operatic symbolism.

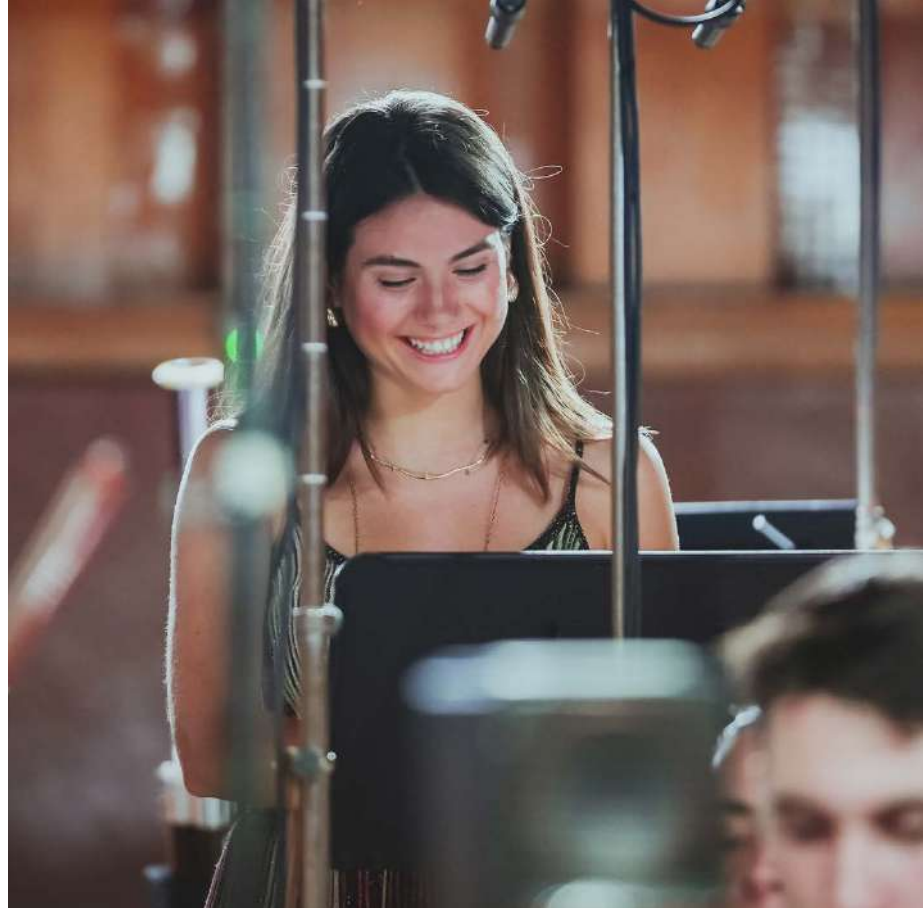
The song of birds has not only inspired a lyrical foray through the history of European opera and lieder, as the included compositions by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908) and Alexander Alyabyev (1787–1851) demonstrate. These pieces evocatively portray the soothing voice of the nightingale as an expression of Russian melancholy and passion.

In conclusion, Serena Sáenz performs Vincenzo de Crescenzo's (1875–1964) *Rondine al nido* (1926), a passionate, nostalgic portrayal of a swallow in flight, interpreting birdsong as a symbol of impermanence and eternal beauty.

Over the centuries, birdsong has played a fascinating role in opera arias and art songs. This CD offers listeners a broad selection of pieces that illustrate this tradition, performed by an excellent interpreter. We are drawn into a world of emotions and metaphors, uniting diverse cultures by transforming the perhaps most original form of all languages, birdsong, into the perhaps most universal of all languages, music. For example, when French romanticism meets the “Russian soul”, or when composers such as Félicien David combine the typical sound of European opera with exotic oriental elements such as pentatonic scales.

Hubert Wagner

Translation: Alexander Zuckrow



El canto del pájaro en la ópera y la canción: un homenaje musical a la naturaleza

Cuando los pájaros cantores, como las golondrinas o las alondras, sueltan sus fuertes gorjeos al aire, con sus trinos, *staccatos* y *glissandos*, los amantes de la música —y no solo ellos— se dan cuenta de que el canto de los pájaros es como una forma primaria del canto, quizá, incluso la más primigenia de todas. Por eso, no es de extrañar que, desde los albores de la ópera y la canción artística, o de sus formas predecesoras, compositores y creadores musicales se hayan inspirado en este mismo arquetipo de la canción y la naturaleza.

Entre las innumerables imágenes que la naturaleza representa en la música, el canto de los pájaros ocupa un lugar especial. Con su melódico e interminable juego de ornamentación y la riqueza de las distintas especies, ha sido siempre un símbolo de belleza, libertad, pureza, amor y trascendencia. En especial, el ruiseñor y su canto (que, en música, es una metáfora de la armonía perfecta que existe en la naturaleza) ha inspirado a innumerables compositores.

Su capacidad de crear complejas melodías se compara frecuentemente con la voz humana. Ya en la antigüedad, el canto del ruiseñor simbolizaba la creatividad infinita y los momentos melancólicos de la naturaleza. Ese significado ha seguido vigente en la ópera hasta nuestros días: el ruiseñor se utiliza a menudo como la personificación del anhelo y el ideal romántico y su canto representa los sentimientos humanos más profundos, con todos sus matices y complejidades.

Este también es el caso del disco debut de la soprano Serena Sáenz, cuyo repertorio se centra precisamente en la composición musical del canto del pájaro en las arias de ópera. Con incursiones en la canción artística, este trabajo discográfico invita a los oyentes a viajar a través los siglos combinando tradiciones y culturas musicales para adentrarse así en un mundo de belleza universal.

Justo al principio, en *Quejas, o la Maja y el Ruiseñor*, un aria de la ópera *Goyescas*, compuesta en 1915 por Enrique Granados (1867–1916), el lamento de la protagonista Rosario se funde con el suave y melancólico canto del ruiseñor. Granados combina los paisajes sonoros de la voz humana y la naturaleza para crear una unidad poética impulsada por el imponente colorido español. Lo mismo ocurre en la maravillosa aria del ruiseñor (*Le Rossignol*, 1885) de Léo Delibes (1836–1891), en la que experimentamos el canto del virtuoso pájaro cantor como un polifacético y delicadamente ornamentado solo de flauta. Finas coloraturas permiten a la voz de la soprano y a la flauta establecer un armonioso diálogo que consigue captar en toda su belleza el vínculo con la naturaleza de las composiciones románticas francesas.

La brillante aria de coloratura de Jacques Offenbach (1819–1880) *Les Oiseaux dans la charmille* de *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (1880) nos transporta, en cambio, a un mundo totalmente distinto. Aquí, el canto de los pájaros se convierte en una expresión de la alegría de vivir con una despreocupada y coqueta levedad. La música, de composición típicamente humorística para Offenbach, simboliza la animada actividad de unos pájaros cantores en un carpe. Sin duda, *Charmant oiseau* de Félicien David (1810–1976), de su ópera *La Perle du Brésil* (1851) —que rara vez se ha llevado al estudio— puede considerarse un punto álgido de esta grabación. Lo más llamativo es la combinación de paisajes sonoros orientales y la tradición operística clásica europea, un elemento típico de David que, además, mantuvo

una estrecha relación artística con el mismísimo Jacques Offenbach. El canto del ruiseñor se convierte en un símbolo de exotismo y seducción, una especie de puente artístico entre diferentes culturas.

Villanelle (1893), de la compositora y soprano italoflamenca Eva Dell'Acqua (1856–1930), destaca como una joya no menos impresionante. La obra no solo cautiva por su danzante elegancia, sino que también exige un control vocal magistral por parte de la intérprete para imitar con facilidad y brillo celestial el complejo canto del pájaro, enriquecido a nivel técnico con una ornamentación muy exigente.

También hay espacio para obras del siglo XX: encontramos, entre otras, la poética y simbólica *Lied der Nachtigall* (1941), de Franz Grothe (1908–1982), de la película *El ruiseñor sueco*, o *Ach, ach, ach! Liebwerte Freunde, gegrüßt!* de Walter Braunfels (1882–1954) (de *Die Vögel*, 1919), que confiere una impresionante profundidad dramática a las partes vocales poderosamente compuestas y las sitúa así en el contexto de un simbolismo operístico más amplio.

El canto de los pájaros puede ser algo más que un recorrido lírico por la cultura europea de la ópera y la canción, tal y como demuestran las composiciones de Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908) y Alexander Alyabyev (1787–1851), que transforman la relajante voz del ruiseñor en una conmovedora expresión de la melancolía y la pasión rusas.

Por último, Serena Sáenz presenta *Rondine al nido* (1926), de Vincenzo de Crescenzo (1875–1964), un retrato apasionado y nostálgico del vuelo de las golondrinas que interpreta el canto de los pájaros como símbolo de fugacidad y belleza eterna.

El canto de los pájaros siempre ha jugado un papel clave en las arias y canciones de ópera. Este trabajo discográfico ofrece un brillante repertorio con una amplia selección de obras del más alto nivel musical. Invita a adentrarse en un mundo de emociones y metáforas y conecta culturas utilizando el canto de los pájaros, probablemente, la forma más primitiva de todos los lenguajes, para transformarla en la que es, quizás, la más universal: la música. Así ocurre cuando el romanticismo francés se encuentra con el alma rusa o cuando compositores como Félicien David consiguen combinar las imágenes sonoras típicas de la tradición operística europea con exóticos elementos orientales, como los pentatónicos.

Hubert Wagner

*(Traducción: Sandra Níguez Fernández,
allround Fremdsprachen GmbH von der Lühe)*



Der Gesang der Vögel in der Oper und im Lied: Eine musikalische Hommage an die Natur

Wenn Singvögel, wie Schwalben oder Lerchen, laut vor sich hin tschilpend durch die Lüfte ziehen – voller Triller, Staccati und Glissandi – fällt nicht nur musikkaffinen Menschen auf, dass der Gesang von Vögeln so etwas wie eine Urform, vielleicht sogar die Ursprünglichste aller Formen, des Gesangs darstellt. Und so scheint es wenig verwunderlich, dass sich bereits seit den frühesten Tagen der Oper und des Kunstlieds, beziehungsweise seiner Vorgängerformen, Komponisten und Musikschafter von ebenjener Urform des Gesangs und der Natur im Allgemeinen inspirieren ließen.

Unter den vielgestaltigen Bildern, die die Natur in der Musik darstellt, nimmt der Gesang der Vögel einen besonderen Platz ein. Mit seinem melodiosen, scheinbar nicht enden wollendem Spiel an Verzierungen und Artenreichtum dient er seither oft als Symbol für Schönheit, Freiheit, Reinheit, Liebe und Transzendenz. Besonders die Nachtigall und deren Gesang, der in der Musik vor allem die perfekte Harmonie zur Natur metaphorisiert, inspirierte zahllose Komponisten.

Ihre Fähigkeit, komplexe Melodien zu erzeugen, wurde häufig mit der menschlichen Stimme verglichen. Bereits in der Antike galt der Gesang der Nachtigall als Sinnbild für unendliche Kreativität und melancholische Momente in der Natur. Diese Bedeutung setzt sich in der Oper bis heute fort: Die Nachtigall wird oft als Verkörperung von Sehnsucht und romantischem Ideal verwendet, ihr Gesang spiegelt dabei die tiefsten menschlichen Gefühle mit all ihren Nuancen und Komplexitäten wider.

So auch auf der vorliegenden Debüt-CD der Sopranistin Serena Sáenz, deren Repertoireauswahl sich auf ebenjene musikalische Ausarbeitung des Vogelgesangs in Opernarien fokussiert, mit Ausflügen ins Kunstlied, und die auf eine Reise durch die Jahrhunderte einlädt, indem sie verschiedenste Musiktraditionen und Kulturen verbindet und ihre Hörerschaft somit in eine Welt der universellen Schönheit entführt.

Gleich zu Beginn etwa, in Enrique Granados' (1867–1916) *Quejas, o la Maja y el Ruiseñor* aus seiner 1915 komponierten Oper *Goyescas*. In dieser Arie verschmilzt der Klagegesang der Protagonistin Rosario mit einem sanft-melancholischen Lied der Nachtigall. Granados verbindet hier die Klangwelten der menschlichen Stimme und der Natur zu einer poetischen Einheit, die vom spanischen Kolorit eindrucksvoll getragen wird. Ähnlich auch in Léo Delibes' (1836–1891) wunderbarer Nachtigallenarie (*Le Rossignol*, 1885), in der wir den Gesang des virtuosen Singvogels als facettenreiches, delikat-verziertes Flötensolo erleben. Feine Koloraturen lassen Sopranstimme und Flöte in einen harmonischen Dialog treten, der die für französische Romantikkompositionen typische Naturverbundenheit in voller Schönheit einzufangen weiß.

Jacques Offenbachs (1819–1880) spritzige Koloraturarie *Les Diseaux dans la charmille* aus *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (1880) führt uns hingegen in eine ganz andere Welt. Hier wird der Gesang der Vögel zum Ausdruck spielerischer Lebensfreude und unbeschwerter, koketter Leichtigkeit. Die für Offenbach typisch humorvoll komponierte Musik verbildlicht das rege Treiben einiger Singvögel in einer Hainbuche. Mit Sicherheit als ein Höhepunkt der vorliegenden Einspielung kann Félicien Davids (1810–1976) *Charmant oiseau* aus seiner selten eingespielten Oper *La Perle du Brésil* (1851) gelten. Auffällig ist hier vor allem die für David, der übrigens selbst eine enge künstlerische Beziehung zu Jacques Offenbach pflegte, typische Kombination aus orientalischen Klangbildern und klassischer europäischer Operntradition.

Der Gesang der Nachtigall wird hier zu einem Sinnbild für Exotik und Verführung, einer Art kunstvoll vorgetragenen Brücke zwischen verschiedenen Kulturen.

Als kaum weniger eindrucksvoll komponiertes Juwel muss *Villanelle* (1893) der italo-flämischen Komponistin und Sopranistin Eva Dell'Acqua (1856–1930) genannt werden, das nicht nur durch tänzerische Eleganz besticht, sondern auch meisterhafte stimmliche Beherrschung der Interpretin einfordert, um den komplex angelegten und technisch mit höchst anspruchsvollen Verzierungen angereicherten Vogelgesang mit Leichtigkeit und sternenklarer Brillanz zu imitieren.

Auch Werke des 20. Jahrhunderts finden ihren Platz: Etwa Franz Grothes (1908–1982) poetisch und symbolkräftiges *Lied der Nachtigall* (1941) aus dem Film *Die Schwedische Nachtigall* oder Walter Braunfels' (1882–1954) *Ach, ach, ach! Liebwerte Freunde, gegrüßt!* (aus *Die Vögel*, 1919), das den wirkungsstark komponierten Singstimmen eine eindrucksvolle dramatische Tiefe verleiht und sie so in den Kontext einer größeren Opernsymbolik zu setzen weiß.

Dass der Gesang von Vögeln nicht nur ein lyrischer Streifzug durch die europäische Opern- und Liedkultur sein kann, beweisen Kompositionen von Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908) und Alexander Alyabyev (1787–1851), die die wohltuende Stimme der Nachtigall in berührender Weise als Ausdruck russischer Melancholie und Leidenschaft verarbeiten.

Zum Abschluss präsentiert Serena Sáenz mit Vincenzo de Crescenzos (1875–1964) *Rondine al nido* (1926) ein leidenschaftliches, nostalgisches Porträt des Schwalbenflugs, das den Vogelgesang als Sinnbild für Vergänglichkeit und ewige Schönheit interpretiert.

Vogelgesang spielt in Opernarien und Liedern seit jeher eine faszinierende Rolle. Die vorliegende CD liefert mit intelligent ausgewähltem Repertoire ein breites Spektrum an Eindrücken auf höchstem musikalischem Niveau, lädt in eine Welt der Emotionen und Metaphern ein und verbindet Kulturen, indem sie mit dem Gesang der Vögel die vielleicht ursprünglichste Form aller Sprachen in die vielleicht universellste aller Sprachen, nämlich die Musik, transformiert. Dann etwa, wenn französische Romantik auf russische Seele trifft, oder wenn es Komponisten wie Félicien David gelingt, die klangtypischen Bilder europäischer Operntradition mit exotisch orientalischen Elementen wie Pentatoniken zu verbinden.

Hubert Wagner

SERENA SÁENZ

Serena Sáenz has been praised for her “thorough knowledge of music, refined ornamentation, and luminous high notes, backed by an impressive array of bel canto techniques.” She was awarded three prizes at Operalia 2022: The Second Prize in the Plácido Domingo World Opera Competition, the Pepita Embil Zarzuela Prize, and the Birgit Nilsson Prize. Despite her young age, she is a frequent guest at many of the world’s most prestigious opera houses.

In 2021, Serena won the First Prize and the Audience Award at the Montserrat Caballé International Singing Competition, becoming the first Spaniard to achieve this feat. She has also received multiple prizes at the Paris Opera Competition and the Francesc Viñas International Competition. In 2023, she was honored with the Opera Actual Award for Most Promising Young Artist, as well as the Ópera XXI Award for Best Young Singer.

Her busy calendar reflects her expanding repertoire and growing international presence. She performs regularly at the Vienna State Opera, with the recent highlights including Lauretta in Puccini’s *Il trittico*, Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte*, and the roles of Olympia and Giulietta in *Les Contes d’Hoffmann*.

The Berlin State Opera, where she was a member of the prestigious International Opera Studio, holds a special place in Serena’s career. Recent performances there include Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* and Ilia in a revival of David McVicar’s *Idomeneo*. She made her debut at the Deutsche Oper Berlin as Lucia in *Lucia di Lammermoor* – a role she has also sung at



the Bavarian State Opera and the Gran Teatre del Liceu. One of Serena's signature roles is Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, which she has performed at Staatsoper Berlin, Vienna State Opera, Royal Danish Opera, and Ópera de Tenerife.

In addition to her opera career, Serena is an active concert performer. She opened the Vienna Opera Ball 2024, singing with renowned mezzo-soprano Elina Garanča, with whom she toured Austria and Latvia later that season. Serena has also appeared alongside Plácido Domingo at festivals in Český Krumlov and Starlite Marbella, presenting Spanish zarzuela repertoire. She delighted audiences in her hometown with an open-air gala concert on Barcelona's beach in front of 30,000 people.

Serena often performs with guitarist Pablo Sáinz Villegas. Together they appeared at the National Theatre in Santo Domingo, Ithra in Saudi Arabia and the Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona.

Born in Barcelona, Serena made her professional debut at 13 in the children's opera *Brundibár* by Hans Krása at the Gran Teatre del Liceu. She studied with Prof. Anna Ollet and later at the Conservatori Superior del Liceu in Barcelona, receiving a scholarship for excellence for two consecutive years. Serena graduated with a Master's and a Konzertexamen degree from Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler in Berlin, studying with Prof. Anna Samuil. Alongside her vocal studies, she trained in ballet and modern dance and holds professional qualifications as a fitness coach and nutritionist.

CLELIA CAFIERO

Neapolitan conductor Clelia Cafiero currently serves as Principal Guest Conductor at the Opéra de Tours. She first came to international attention with her Summer 2023 debut at the Chorégies d'Orange where she led the Orchestre National de Lyon in *Carmen*.

In 2024 she made several important debuts, including her London debut when she led the English National Opera in *La Bohème*, at the Opéra Royal de Wallonie in Liège with *La Périochole*, and a production of *Così fan tutte* with the Nikikai Opera Foundation marking her debut in Japan. Her symphonic debuts of the 2024/25 season include subscription concerts with the Orchestre National de Lyon and special concerts with the Irish National Orchestra. She also leads symphonic concerts and a production of *Die Zauberflöte* in Tours.

The 2023/24 season brought Clelia Cafiero to the Opéra de Marseille for *La Traviata*, the Angers-Nantes Opéra and the Opéra de Rennes for *Tosca*, the Opéra de Tours for *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and a concert with the Orchestra dell'Accademia della Scala. She returned to Orange in Summer 2024 to lead the Orchestre Philharmonique de Nice in a performance of *Tosca*. Furthermore, she made her debut at the Festival Radio France, conducting the Orchestre national de Montpellier in Rossini's *Stabat Mater*.

In the 2023/24 season she also made a pair of recordings: one of arias by Gluck, Mozart and others with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Marseille and tenor Nathan Granner, and one presenting bird themed arias and songs with soprano Serena Sáenz and the Transylvania



State Philharmonic Orchestra. In previous seasons Clelia Cafiero made her highly successful Canadian debut at the Opéra de Quebec with *Madama Butterfly*, conducted *Carmen* at the Opéra de Marseille and symphonic concerts with the Gulbenkian Orchestra in Lisbon, the Polish National Radio Symphony in Katowice and the Orchestre National de Lorraine. Some of her earlier engagements include the Musiques Interdites Festival in France, as well as the Lutoslawski Contemporary Music Festival and the 26th Beethoven Festival in Warsaw. She has also conducted the Cameristi della Scala on tour in Italy, the Czech Republic and China.

Clelia Cafiero began her musical career as a concert pianist, which brought her to the stages of the Concertgebouw, Carnegie Hall, Royal Albert Hall, and the Philharmonie de Paris, among others. Between 2013 and 2019, she worked regularly as répétiteur at the Teatro alla Scala. She studied piano and conducting at the conservatories in Naples and Milan, as well as at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. She also holds a master's degree in philosophy from the University of Naples Federico II.

TRANSYLVANIA STATE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA FILARMONICA DE STAT "TRANSILVANIA"

Founded in 1955 by maestro Antonin Ciolan, the Transylvania State Philharmonic Orchestra enjoys a leading position among Romanian orchestras. Numerous tour engagements led the orchestra to prestigious concert halls and festivals, including the Musikverein Vienna, the Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome, the Lucerne Festival, the George Enescu Festival Bucharest, the La Folle Journée Festival in Tokyo, the Eufonie Festival in Warsaw, as well as festivals in Turin, Istanbul, Santander, Strasbourg, Bratislava, Berlin, and Interlaken.

Throughout its history, the orchestra has collaborated with some of the world's most distinguished conductors and soloists: Kurt Masur, Witold Lutoslawski, Carlo Zecchi, Yannis Xenakis, Krzysztof Penderecki, Sir John Pritchard, Lawrence Foster, John Axelrod, Jörg Widmann, Dennis Russell Davies, Sviatoslav Richter, Radu Lupu, Ruggiero Ricci, Valentin Gheorghiu, Silvia Marcovici, José Carreras, Angela Gheorghiu, Ruxandra Donose, Roberto Alagna, Philippe Entremont, David Grimal, Sayaka Shoji, Leonidas Kavakos, Viktoria Mullova, and Simon Trpčeski, to name just a few.

With over 120 recordings, the Transylvania State Philharmonic Orchestra boasts the largest discography among Romanian orchestras. These recordings reflect the entire range of the orchestra's wide repertoire, from baroque to contemporary music, including impressive series such as the complete Brahms and Bruckner symphonies, as well as works by Vivaldi, Wagner, Debussy, Ravel, and Enescu.

In 2021, a studio recording of Puccini's *La fanciulla del West*, conducted by Lawrence Foster was released by Pentatone. It was followed by two studio recordings (one with works by Bartók and Kodály, the other a tribute to Renata Tebaldi with soprano Melody Moore).

Though it is mainly focused on symphonic and vocal-symphonic programs, the orchestra also pays special attention to the operatic repertoire. Remarkable in this respect are the performances of George Enescu's opera *Oedipe* at the Lucerne Festival, Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra* (conducted by Antonello Allemandi) and Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (conducted by Marco Armiliato) at the Santander Festival. Among the major recent accomplishments are concert versions of Wagner's *The Rhinegold* and *The Valkyrie*, as well as the concert version of Puccini's *La fanciulla del West* with Lawrence Foster, the orchestra's principal guest conductor as of the 2022/23 season, and Bellini's *Norma* with Pier Giorgio Morandi.

Since the beginning of the 2023/24 season, Cristian Mandeal is the chief conductor of the Transylvania State Philharmonic Orchestra.



1 **ENRIQUE GRANADOS** (1867–1916)

Quejas, o la Maja y el Ruiseñor

(from *Goyescas, o Los Majos enamorados*, 1915)

Libretto by Fernando Periquet

Rosario

¿Porqué entre sombras el ruiseñor
entona su armonioso cantar?

¿Acaso al rey del día
guarda rencor
y de él quiera

algún agravio vengar?

Guarda quizás su pecho

oculto tal dolor,

que en la sombra espera alivio hallar,
triste entonando cantos de amor,
¡ay! de amor.

¡Y tal vez alguna flor

tremborosa del pudor de amor,

es la esclava enamorada de su cantor!

¡Misterio es el cantar

que entona envuelto en sombra
el ruiseñor!

¡Ah! Son los amores como flor

a merced de la mar.

Rosario

Why does the nightingale
sings his harmonious song in the shadows?

Does he hold a grudge
against the king of the day
and does he want to avenge
some grievance from him?

Perhaps he keeps such hidden pain
in his breast,

and hopes to find relief in the shadow,
while sadly singing songs of love,
alas! of love.

And perhaps there is some flower,

trembling from the blush of love,

being the slave in love with the singer!

Mysterious is the song
that the nightingale intones,
wrapped in shadow!

Ah! love is like a flower

surrendered to the mercy of the sea.

¡Amor! ¡Amor!

¡Ah, no hay cantar sin amor!

¡Ah! ruiseñor:

es tu cantar himno de amor.

¡Oh ruiseñor!

Love! Love!

Ah, there is no singing without love!

Ah, nightingale,
your singing is a hymn of love.

Oh, nightingale!

2 **JACQUES OFFENBACH** (1819–1880)

Les Oiseaux dans la charmille

(from *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, 1880)

Libretto by Jules Barbier, based on the play of the same name by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré

Olympia

Les oiseaux dans la charmille,
dans les cieux l'astre du jour,
tout parle à la jeune fille d'amour !

Ah! Voilà la chanson gentile,
la chanson d'Olympia ! Ah !

Tout ce qui chante et résonne
et soupire, tour à tour,
émeut son cœur qui frissonne d'amour !

Ah ! Voilà la chanson mignonne,
la chanson d'Olympia ! Ah !

Olympia

The birds in the bower,
the sun in the sky,
everything speaks of love to the young girl!

Ah! This is the sweet song,
the song of Olympia! Ah!

Everything that sings and sounds
and sighs, in turn,
moves her heart, which trembles with love!

Ah! This is the cute song,
the song of Olympia! Ah!

3 **LÉO DELIBES** (1836–1891)

Le Rossignol

(1885, Arr. by Andreas Gies, Flute solo by Ary van Leeuwen)

Lyricist unknown

Écoutez la chanson
du rossignol volage,
aux bergers du village
il donne la leçon, écoutez !
Ah ! Écoutez la chanson !

Chantons, chantons l'amour
tant que le printemps dure.
Sous la jeune verdure,
et la nuit et le jour,
chantons, chantons l'amour.

Il revient tous les ans,
dit une pastourelle,
car la rose nouvelle
renaît chaque printemps,
il revient tous les ans.

Ah ! Non, non...
L'amour ne revient pas,
pastourelle frivole.
Dès que l'amour s'envole,
c'est pour toujours, hélas !
L'amour ne revient pas.

Listen to the song
of the fickle nightingale,
he teaches a lesson
to the shepherds of the village, listen!
Ah! Listen to the song!

Let's sing, let's sing of love
as long as the spring lasts.
Beneath the young green,
during night and day,
let's sing, let's sing of love!

He returns every year,
a shepherdess says,
because the new rose
is reborn every spring,
he returns every year.

Ah! No, no...
Love does not come back,
frivolous shepherdess.
As soon as love flies away,
it's forever, alas!
Love does not come back.

4 **FÉLICIEEN DAVID** (1810–1876)

Charmant oiseau

(from *La Perle du Brésil*, 1851)

Libretto by J. Gabriel & Sylvain Saint-Étienne

Zora

Charmant oiseau qui sous l'ombrage
étoile à nos yeux éblouis
les couleurs de son beau plumage,
mêlé d'azur et de rubis.
Quand sur la tige à fleur dorée
il se balance tout joyeux,
son aile brille, diaprée,
ainsi qu'un prisme radieux.
Qu'il est joli, le Mysoli !
Ah !

Quand sur sa couche de ramée,
que berce la brise en passant,
repose sa compagne aimée
au baiser doux et caressant.
Le plaisir, fleur épanouie,
dore et parfume tous ses jours.
Et doucement coule sa vie
au sein des plus tendres amours.
Qu'il est joli, le Mysoli !
Ah !

Zora

Charming bird that under the shade
displays to our dazzled eyes
the colors of his beautiful plumage,
mixed azure and ruby.
When he swings joyfully
on the golden-flowered stem,
his wing shines, iridescent,
like a radiant prism.
How pretty he is, the Mysoli!
Ah!

When on her bed of leafy branches,
rocked by the passing breeze,
his beloved companion rests
with soft, caressing kiss.
Pleasure, the blossomed flower,
gilds and perfumes all his days.
And softly flows his life
in the bosom of tender love.
How pretty he is, the Mysoli!
Ah!

5 **CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS** (1835–1921)

Le Rossignol et la rose

(from *Parysatis*, 1901)

Ah !
(vocalise)

Ah!
(vocalise)

6 **EVA DELL'ACQUA** (1856–1930)

Villanelle

(1893, Orch. by Fritz Ernaldy)

Lyrics by Frédéric van Elst

J'ai vu passer l'hirondelle
dans le ciel pur du matin:
elle allait, à tire d'aile,
vers le pays où l'appelle
le soleil et le jasmin.
J'ai vu passer l'hirondelle !

I saw the swallow passing by
in the clear morning sky:
she was flying away
to the land to which she was called
by the sun and the jasmin.
I saw the swallow passing by!

J'ai longtemps suivi des yeux
le vol de la voyageuse...
depuis, mon âme rêveuse
l'accompagne par les cieus.
Ah ! ah ! au pays mystérieux !
Ah !

I followed the flight of the traveler
with my eyes for a long time...
since then, my dreamy soul
has accompanied her through the skies.
Ah! Ah! to the mysterious land!
Ah!

Et j'aurais voulu comme elle
suivre le même chemin.

And I would have liked to follow
the path that she took.

J'ai vu passer l'hirondelle,
elle allait, à tire d'aile.

I saw the swallow passing by,
she was flying away,

J'ai vu passer l'hirondelle, etc.

I saw the swallow passing by etc.

7 **CHARLES GOUNOD** (1818–1893)

O légère hirondelle

(from *Mireille*, 1864)

Libretto by Michel Carré after Frédéric Mistral's poem *Mirèio*

Mireille

O légère hirondelle,
messagère fidèle,
vers mon ami vole gaïment
et conte-lui mon doux tourment.
Parle-lui pour moi-même
et dis-lui que je l'aime !
Vincent peut croire à mon serment.
Vole, vole gaïment ! Ah !
O légère hirondelle,
messagère fidèle,
vers mon ami vole gaïment,
vole, vole gaïment ! Ah !

Mireille

O gentle swallow,
faithful messenger,
fly merrily to my friend
and tell him about my sweet torment.
Speak to him for myself,
and tell him that I love him!
Vincent can trust in my vow.
Fly, fly merrily! Ah!
O light swallow,
faithful messenger
fly merrily to my friend,
fly, fly merrily! Ah!

8 **FRANZ GROTHE** (1908–1982)

Lied der Nachtigall

(from the motion picture *Die schwedische Nachtigall*, 1941, Arr. by Walter Borchert)

Lyrics by Willy Dehmel

Jenny Lind

Nachtigall! Ah!

Der alte Park ist still und liegt in tiefer Ruh',
leise geht die Nacht durch den Wald.

Noch hält des Mondes Licht

die Augen alle zu,

bis des alten Tages Schritt verhallt.

Da geht ein Raunen durch die Luft –

und horch, von fern erklingt

das Lied der Nachtigall.

Zauberlied der Nacht,

Stimme der Natur,

deine Melodie klingt so süß an mein Ohr.

Zauberlied der Nacht,

Stimme der Natur,

deine Töne fliegen zum Himmel empor.

Ah!

Zauberlied der Nacht ...

Nachtigall! Ah!

Jenny Lind

Nightingale! Ah!

The old park is quiet and lies in deep peace,
softly the night falls on the forest.

The moon's light still keeps

all eyes closed,

until the old day's footsteps fade away.

A murmur flies through the air –

and listen, from afar the nightingale's song

can be heard.

Enchanting song of the night,

voice of nature,

your melody sounds so sweet to my ear.

Magic song of the night,

voice of nature,

your sound flies to the heavens.

Ah!

Enchanting song of the night...

Nightingale! Ah!

9 **WALTER BRAUNFELS** (1882–1954)

Ach, ach, ach! Liebwerte Freunde, gegrüßt!

(from *Die Vögel*, Op. 30, 1919)

Lyrics by Walter Braunfels, freely adapted from Aristophanes' ancient comedy *The Birds*

Nachtigall

Ach, ach, ach!

Liebwerte Freunde, gegrüßt,

heut' weilt ihr in unserem Reiche,

wo das Leben leicht den Frohen fließt,

jede Stunde neue Freude gebiert;

von vollem Herz spricht süßer Sang;

auch liebt man hier so zart,

so treu wie ihr nicht liebt,

ihr Armen werkelt Tag und Nacht

und seht doch nie den Himmel,

den ich seh'.

Alle Sorge ist leicht,

folgt ihr unserer Weise;

tut von euch die trübe Beschwerde,

die an der Erde zäh euch hält;

das schafftet ja nur Pein, nur Weh,

nur Pein,

ja, Hass allein! Ah!

Und doch sing ich sehnsuchtsvoll,

mich sehnd ... wonach denn?

Nightingale

Alas, alas, alas!

Hail, dear friends,

today you are in our kingdom,

where the life flows easily for the happy ones,

where every hour gives birth to new joy,

where sweet sounds come from the heart;

you also love so tenderly here,

as faithfully as you do not love,

you poor souls work day and night,

but never see the sky

that I see.

Every sorrow is light

when you follow our way,

put away the dull burden

that keeps you tenaciously stuck to the ground;

that creates only pain, only sorrow,

only pain,

yes, hatred alone! Ah!

And yet I sing longingly,

longing ... for what?

Ach! Aus mir heraus, ach, über mich hin,
je weiter ich seh', wer wüsste es nicht,
wer bringt zu schweigen die süße Qual?
Wer? Ah!

Alas! Out of me, ah, over me,
the further I look, who would not know,
who can silence the sweet torment?
Who? Alas!

10 **NIKOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV** (1844–1908)

Plenivshis' rozoj, solovej

(Пленившись розой, соловей/The Nightingale Enslaved by the Rose, 1866)

Lyrics by Aleksey Koltsov

Пленившись розой, соловей
И день и ночь поёт над ней;
Но роза молча песням внемлет...
На лире так певец иной
Поёт для девы молодой;
А дева милая не знает,
Кому поёт и отчего
Печальны песни так его.

The nightingale, enslaved by the rose,
sings above her, day and night;
but the rose listens mutely...
Another singer, much the same,
sings for his young maiden to his lyre;
but the sweet maiden does not know
for whom he sings, and wherefore
his songs are so sad.

11 **ALEXANDER ALYABYEV** (1787–1851)

Solovej

(Соловей/The Nightingale, 1826, Orch. by Mikhail Glinka & Andreas Gies,
edited by Andreas Gies)

Lyrics by Anton Delvig

Соловей мой, соловей,
Голосистый соловей!
Ты куда, куда летишь,
Где всю ночьку пропоёшь ?
Соловей мой, соловей,
Голосистый соловей!

Nightingale, my nightingale,
you powerful-voiced nightingale!
Where, where are you flying,
where will you sing all through the night?
Nightingale, my nightingale,
you powerful-voiced nightingale!

*Translation of Track 10 & 11:
Natalia Farhi*

12 **VICTOR HERBERT** (1859–1924)
The Nightingale and the Star
(from *Mlle Modiste*, 1905, Arr. by Andreas Gies)
Libretto by Henry Blossom

Fifi

Once a young nightingale
fell to repining
over a star which so brightly was shining
up in the sky, cold and so high,
taking no thought
of the poor little nightingale.
Still ev'ry evening he'd sing to his starlove,
sending his soul in a song to his far love.
Ah, how sweet his song to that distant star.

Ah!

Ah me, he thought of love he would die,
for twinkling so coldly,
she gave no sign of reply. Ah!
Ah, how sweet his song to that distant star!

Still through the night,
when the tired world was sleeping,
sadly this poor little bird,
his long, lonely vigil was keeping.
But though he knew
that he cherished a vain love,
ah, how he sang to his star above.

So from the sad little heart
that was breaking,
came there a song to the world
that was waking,
soul all afire, mad with desire,
burning and yearning for love
that could never be.
Ah, how sweet his song to that distant star!

Ah! And so, although vain
as his love might prove,
ah, night long his song
cheers the hearts that may love,
night long his song
cheers all the hearts that love.

13 **HENRY BISHOP** (1787–1856)
Lo! Here the Gentle Lark (from *The Comedy of Errors*, 1819, edited by Andreas Gies)
Lyrics by William Shakespeare, from *The Comedy of Errors*

Adriana

Lo! Here the gentle lark,
weary of rest,
from his moist cabinet
mounts up on high,
and wakes the morning,
from whose silver breast
the sun ariseth in true majesty.

14 **VINCENZO DE CRESCENZO** (1875–1964)

Rondine al nido

(1926, Arr. by Andreas Gies)

Lyrics by Luigi Sica

Sotto la gronda della torre antica
una rondine amica
allo sbocciar del mandorlo è tornata.

Ritorna tutti gli anni,
sempre alla stessa data,
monti e mari essa varca per tornar.

Solo amore,
quando fugge e va lontano,
speri invano, ma non torna più.

Nella penombra dolce della sera
passa la primavera,
cinguettano le rondini nel volo,
ebbre di luce e d'aria,
ed io son triste e solo,
monti e mari tu non varchi
per tornar.

Mia piccina,
fosti tutta la mia vita,
sei fuggita e non torni più!

Under the eaves of the ancient tower
a friendly swallow has returned
at the blossoming of the almond tree.

She comes back every year,
always on the same day,
to return she crosses mountains and seas.

Only love,
once it flees and goes far away,
you hope in vain, but it never returns.

In the pleasant evening twilight
the spring passes,
the swallows chirp in their flight,
inebriated of the light and the breeze,
and I am sad and lonely,
for you do not cross mountains and seas
to return.

My little one,
you were my whole life,
but you ran away, and you never return!

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