

Sharon Abreu & Friends
Cyber-Liner Notes & Translations

1. **Caro mio ben** (My dear beloved), Giuseppe Giordani (1744-1798)
2. **Nel cor piu non mi sento** (In my heart I no longer feel), Giovanni Paisiello (1740-1816)
3. **Sure, on this shining night**, Samuel Barber/James Agee (1941)
4. **The Secrets of the Old**, Samuel Barber/W.B. Yeats (1941)
5. **Du bist wie eine blume** (You are like a flower), Robert Schumann/Heinrich Heine (*Myrthen*) (1840)
6. **Quando m'en vo soletta** (When I go along alone), Giacomo Puccini (*La Boheme*) (1896)
7. **Deh vieni, non tardar** (Beloved, don't delay), W.A. Mozart (*The Marriage of Figaro*) (1786)
8. **The Jewel Song**, Charles Gounod (*Faust*) (1859)
9. **Rusalka's Song to the Moon**, Antonin Dvorak (*Rusalka*) (1901)
10. **Sull'aria** (On the breeze), W.A. Mozart (*The Marriage of Figaro*) (1786)
(Duet with Amy Hamilton)
11. **Danny Boy**, Londonderry Air/Frederick Weatherly (1913)
12. **One Kiss**, Sigmund Romberg (*The New Moon*) (1928)
13. **I'm Nobody**, Vincent Persichetti/Emily Dickinson (1958)
14. **Why do they shut me out of Heaven?**, Aaron Copland/Emily Dickinson (1951)
15. **Heart, we will forget him**, A. Copland/E. Dickinson (1951)
17. **La ci darem la mano** (Give me your hand), W.A. Mozart (*Don Giovanni*) (1787)
(Duet with Tony Lee)
16. **Donde lieta usci** (Where happily she left), G. Puccini (*La Boheme*) (1896)
18. **Piangero, la sorte mia** (I will lament my fate), George Frideric Handel (*Giulio Cesare*) (1724)
19. **A la luz de la luna** (By the light of the moon), Anton y Michelena (1918), arr. by A. Fassio (1932)
(Duet with Michael Hurwicz)
20. **Climb Ev'ry Mountain**, Richard Rodgers/Oscar Hammerstein II (*The Sound of Music*) (1959)
21. **O mio babbino caro** (O, dearest daddy), G. Puccini (Gianni Schicchi) (1918)

Caro mio ben is one of the most popular Italian songs from the late 18th century. *Caro mio ben* and *Nel cor piu non mi sento* are in a famous book of 24 Italian arias that most voice students study. They are among my favorite songs – romantic and fun to sing.

1. Caro mio ben

Caro mio ben,	My dear beloved,
Credimi almen,	Believe me at least,
Senza di te languisce il cor.	Without you my heart languishes.
Il tuo fedel	Your faithful one
Sospira ognor.	Always sighs;
Cessa, crudel,	Cease, cruel one,
Tanto rigor!	So much punishment!

2. Nel cor piu non mi sento

Nel cor più non mi sento	No longer do I feel
Brillar la gioventù;	Youth blazing in my heart;
Cagion del mio tormento,	The cause of my torment,
Amor, sei colpa tu.	My love, is you!
Mi pizzichi, mi stuzzichi,	You sting me, you poke me,
Mi pungichi, mi mastichi;	You pinch me, you chew me.
Che cosa è questo, ahimè?	Alas, what is this thing?
Pietà, pietà, pietà!	Pity, pity, have pity!
Amore è un certo che,	My love, it is certain
Che disperar mi fa.	That you make me despair!

3. The Secrets of the Old

Samuel Barber, born in Pennsylvania in 1910, wrote his first piece at age 7 and attempted his first opera at age 10. Barber was a great admirer of Yeats. Oddly enough he set only one of his poems, this one, "The Secrets of the Old".

I have old women's secrets now, that had those of the young.
Madge tells me what I dared not think when my blood was strong.
And what had drowned a lover once, sounds like an old song.
Though Marjory is stricken dumb if thrown in Madge's way,
We three make up a solitude,
For none alive today can know the stories that we know,
Or say the things we say.
How such a man pleased women most of all that are gone.
How such a pair loved many years, and such a pair but one.
Stories of the bed of straw or the bed of down.

4. Sure, on This Shining Night

In 1938, Barber chose the poem, "Sure on This Shining Night" by James Agee, from the volume Permit Me Voyage. Barber, himself an accomplished pianist and baritone, sang its premiere.

James Agee, who wrote novels, short stories, poetry, screenplays, film criticism, and investigative journalism, was never very famous during his lifetime. After his death, his posthumously-published novel A Death in the Family won the Pulitzer Prize.

Sure, on this shining night of star-made shadows round,
 Kindness must watch for me, this side the ground.
 The late year lies down the North -
 All is healed, all is health.
 High summer holds the Earth,
 Hearts, all whole.
 Sure, on this shining night I weep for wonder,
 Wand'ring far alone, of shadows on the stars.

5. Du bist wie eine blume

Robert Schumann was born in Germany in 1810. He suffered from deep depressions and died in 1856 at the age of 46, most likely from syphilis. He was cared for at the end by his wife, pianist and composer Clara Schumann, and a young Johannes Brahms. This song is from Schumann's *Myrthen* written in 1840. It is one of Schumann's beautiful songs on flower poems by Heinrich Heine.

Du bist wie eine Blume, So hold und schön und rein; Ich schau' dich an, Und Wehmut schleicht mir Ins Herz hinein.	You are like a flower, So lovely, fair and pure; I gaze at you And wistful melancholy slips into my heart.
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Mir ist, als ob ich die Hände Aufs Haupt dir legen sollt', Betend, daß Gott dich erhalte So rein und schön und hold.	It's as though I ought to place My hands upon your head And pray God to keep you ever So lovely, fair, and pure.
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6. Quando m'en vo soletta

The next aria is from Giacomo Puccini's famous opera *La Boheme*, which takes place in Paris in the late 1800s. The scene is a bustling café in the Latin Quarter. This aria is sung by the fiery Musetta. Having tired of her rich, aging suitor Alcindoro, she sings this risqué song, *Quando me'n vo (When I go along)*, also known as *Musetta's Waltz*, hoping to reclaim her former sweetheart Marcello's attention.

Quando men vo soletta per la via, La gente sosta e mira E la bellezza mia tutta ricerca in me Da capo a pie'...	When I walk all alone in the street People stop and stare at me And look for my whole beauty From head to feet
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Ed assaporo allor la bramosia Sottile, che da gli occhi traspira E dai palesi vezzi intender sa	And then I taste the slight yearning which transpires from their eyes and which is able to perceive from manifest charms
Alle occulte beltà. Così l'effluvio del desio tutta m'aggira, Felice mi fa!	to most hidden beauties. So the scent of desire is all around me, It makes me happy!

E tu che sai, che memori e ti struggi Da me tanto rifuggi? So ben: le angosce tue non le vuoi dir, Ma ti senti morir!	And you who know, remember and long, you shrink from me so? I know it very well: you don't want to express your anguish, but you feel as if you're dying!
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7. Deh vieni, non tardar

Le nozze di Figaro, ossia la folle giornata, or in English, *The Marriage of Figaro, or the Day of Madness*, is an “opera buffa” or comic opera composed by Mozart in 1786. It’s based on the second story in the trilogy about Figaro by Pierre Beaumarchais written in 1784. Although the play by Beaumarchais was at first banned in Vienna because of its satirization of the aristocracy, the opera became one of Mozart’s most successful works.

It’s my favorite opera because it’s got everything - strong characters and relationships, humor, and the most exquisite and passionate music.

Emperor Joseph II of Vienna is known to have made a law regarding the number of encores that could be sung at performances of *Figaro*, because the audience was demanding so many encores that the already lengthy four-hour opera was commonly running nearly twice as long due to the number of song repetitions.

The opera takes place in Spain. Susanna has just become Figaro’s wife. She knows that Figaro suspects she is about to have a tryst with the Count Almaviva –which she’s not - and she’s aware that he’s spying on her. She’s annoyed at his distrust of her, so she sings this aria, *Beloved, Don’t Delay*, to make him jealous. It works.

The moment has come at last in which I will know joy without care.
Small worries, leave my heart. Don’t come to upset my pleasure.
Oh, how it looks as if Heaven and Earth respond to the loving flame
And to the wonderfulness of this place!
How the night seems to back my intentions.
Please come and don’t delay, oh my beautiful joy!
Come to where love calls you to joy,
As long as the nightly visage does not shine,
As long as the sky is still dark and the world is quiet.
Here the brook murmurs, here the breeze plays,
To restore the heart with their sweet murmur.
Here the flowers smile and the grass is fresh.
Everything here incites towards the pleasures of love.
Come, my treasure, among these hidden shrubs.
Come, come! I want to crown your forehead with roses!

8. Jewel Song

The opera *Faust* is set in 16th century German. Méphistophélès appears to Faust with a tempting image of Marguerite at her spinning wheel and persuades Faust to buy Méphistophélès’s services on earth in exchange for Faust’s in Hell. In this aria, the *Jewel Song*, Marguerite discovers a trunk of jewels left for her by Méphistophélès, which she believes has been left for her by Faust. In the aria, Marguerite tries on the jewelry and looks at herself in the mirror.

Faust was so popular in the U.S. that in New York the opera season began with a performance of it every year for several decades in the late 19th century, a fact to which Edith Wharton made great reference in her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel The Age of Innocence.

Ah! je ris de me voir si belle en ce miroir,
Est-ce toi, Marguerite, est-ce toi?
Réponds-moi, réponds-moi,
Réponds, réponds, réponds vite!
Non! Non! ce n'est plus toi!

Ah, I laugh to see myself so beautiful in this mirror,
Is it you, Marguerite, it is you?
Answer me, answer me,
Respond, respond, respond quickly!
No No! it's no longer you!

Non...non, ce n'est plus ton visage;
C'est la fille d'un roi;
Qu'on salut au passage!

No No! it's no longer your face;
It's the daughter of a king,
One must bow to her as she passes!

Ah s'il était ici!
S'il me voyait ainsi!
Comme une demoiselle,
il me trouverait belle!

Ah if only he were here!
If he should see me thus
Like a lady
He would find me so beautiful!

Achevons la métamorphose,
Il me tarde encor d'essayer
Le bracelet et le collier!
Dieu! c'est comme une main,
Qui sur mon bras se pose! ah! ah!

Let's complete the metamorphosis,
I am late yet in trying on
The bracelet and the necklace!
God! It's like a hand
Which is placed on my arm!

9. Song to the Moon

Written by Czech composer Antonin Dvorak, the opera *Rusalka* premiered in Prague in 1901. It combines the folk customs and dances of Czechoslovakia and the enlightenment's concern with moving towards the mystical wonders of nature. Nature represented the simple and peaceful state of the human consciousness. People began to search for music that displayed these qualities of nature. Dvorak used nature as a theme throughout *Rusalka*.

Rusalka is a water sprite who falls in love with a Prince. Rusalka wants to become a human, so she visits the Witch and cries for help. The Witch leaves her with a difficult fate - she must remain mute while in the world of humans. In this aria, the *Song to the Moon*, Rusalka confides in the moon the secrets of her longing and asks the moon to tell the prince of her love for him.

O, moon high up in the deep, deep sky,
Your light sees far away regions.
You travel round the wide, wide world
Peering into human dwellings.
O, moon stand for a while,
Tell me, where is my lover?
Tell him, please, silvery moon in the sky,
That I am hugging him firmly as you hug the Earth,
And that he should, for at least a while,
Remember me in his dreams.
Light up his far away place,
Tell him who is waiting here!
If he is dreaming about me,
May this remembrance awake him!
O, moon, don't disappear, don't disappear!

10. Sull'aria

This duet from *The Marriage of Figaro* is sung by Susanna and her good friend and employer, the Countess Almaviva. This duet takes place before the aria I just sang. In it the Countess dictates to Susanna a love letter which Susanna is to give to the Count, suggesting that he meet her that night, "under the pine trees." The two women plot to trick and embarrass the Count by catching him with the Countess, dressed up as Susanna, calling him on his unfaithful escapades. This duet, which Amy and I will sing for you, is known as *The Letter Duet* or *Sull'aria*, a little song on the breeze, says:

Che soave zeffiretto
Questa sera spirera
Sotto i pini del boschetto.
E già il resto il capira.
Certo, il capira.

What a gentle zephyr
Will whisper this evening
Beneath the pines in the forest.
And he'll understand the rest.
Oh, yes, certainly he'll understand it.

11. Danny Boy

Danny Boy is a Celtic folk song, whose lyrics are set to the Irish tune Londonderry Air. The lyrics were originally written for a different tune in 1910 by Frederick Weatherly, an English lawyer, and modified to fit Londonderry Air in 1913. Some believe it is sung by a wife, some by a grandmother, in any case, waiting for a loved one to return from battle. See who you think is singing it.

12. One Kiss

The aria *One Kiss* is one of several famous songs from *The New Moon*, a light opera, or operetta, with music by Sigmund Romberg. The book and lyrics were created by Frank Mandel, Laurence Schwab, and Oscar Hammerstein 2nd, who wrote the lyrics for many famous musicals, including *Show Boat*, *South Pacific*, *Oklahoma*, and *The Sound of Music*. *The New Moon* premiered in New York in 1928. The story takes place in 1792, mostly in New Orleans. Robert, a young French aristocrat whose revolutionary inclinations force him to flee his country, ends up in New Orleans. The climactic part of this typically convoluted and romantic story, celebrating the end of the French aristocracy, takes place on a ship called *The New Moon*. Marianne, who is in love with Robert, sings this song.

The following three songs are poems by Emily Dickinson set to music by two American composers. The first song was set by Vincent Persichetti and the 2nd and 3rd songs were set by Aaron Copland.

Born in 1830, Emily Dickinson was one of American literature's most reclusive figures. She spent almost her entire 56 years in her hometown of Amherst, Massachusetts. She felt a bond with people who see themselves as being outsiders and unimportant. Yet she was not a friendless hermit. Though virtually unknown in her lifetime, Dickinson has come to be regarded, along with Walt Whitman, as one of the two quintessential American poets of the 19th century. By her death in 1886, only ten of Dickinson's poems had been published. After her death, her family found 40 hand-bound volumes containing more than 1,700 of her poems.

13. I'm Nobody

This song is from Persichetti's Opus 77 composed in 1958, in which he created superb musical settings for four of Emily Dickinson's poems.

I'm Nobody – Who are you?
Are you nobody, too?
Then there's a pair of us – Don't Tell!!
They'd banish us, you know.
How dreary to be somebody!
How public, like a frog,
To tell your name the livelong day to an admiring bog!

Emily Dickinson's texts, purposeful yet simple, lend themselves well to the voice, and the universal themes in her poetry speak clearly to audiences from all backgrounds. Aaron Copland's sensitivity to the themes of comfort among the elements of Nature, and the satisfaction of simple family life, drew him naturally to the poetry of Emily Dickinson. In 1949 and 1950, he wrote a cycle of twelve songs, all settings of Dickinson's poems, for soprano and piano. These are two of those songs.

14. Why Do They Shut Me Out of Heaven?

Why do they shut me out of Heaven?
Did I sing too loud?
But I can sing a little minor,
Timid as a bird.
Wouldn't the angels try me just once more –
Just see if I troubled them,
But don't shut the door!
Don't shut the door.
Oh, if I were the gentlemen in the white robes,
And they were the little hand that knocked,
Could I forbid?
Why do they shut me out of Heaven?

15. Heart, We Will Forget Him

Heart, we will forget him,
You and I tonight.
You may forget the warmth he gave.
I will forget the light.
When you have done, pray tell me,
That I my thoughts may dim.
Haste, lest while you're lagging,
I may remember him.

16. La ci darem la mano

Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni* premiered in Prague in 1787. Its complete title is *Il dissoluto punito, ossia il Don Giovanni*, literally *The Rake Punished*. Like *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* was billed as an opera buffa. The finale, in which Don Giovanni refuses to repent, has been a captivating philosophical and artistic topic for many writers including George Bernard Shaw, who in *Man and Superman*, parodied the opera (with explicit mention of the Mozart score for the finale scene between the Commendatore and Don Giovanni).

In this duet, *La ci darem la mano*, or *Give me your hand*, Don Giovanni tells the young Zerlina, who has just become engaged to the peasant Masetto, that he wants to marry her and whisk her off to his castle where she will have great fortune. She is torn between his seductive offer and her love for Masetto. In this duet, she decides to go with Giovanni. However, a moment later she is saved from Giovanni's clutches by an older, wiser woman.

La ci darem la mano,
La mi dirai di "sì".
Vedi, non e lontano,
Partiam, ben mio, da qui.

There you will give me your hand.
There you will tell me "yes."
You see, it is not far.
Let us leave, my beloved.

Vorrei, e non vorrei,
Mi trema un poco il cor.
Felice e ver sarei,
Ma puo burlar mi ancor.

I would like to, and yet I would not.
My heart trembles a little.
It's true, I would be happy,
But he may just be tricking me.

Vieni, mio ben diletto.

Come, my delightful love.

Mi fa pieta Masetto.	But I pity Masetto.
Io cangiero tua sorte.	I will change your fate.
Presto, non son piu forte!	Suddenly, I am not so strong.
Vieni!	Come!
Andiam, mio bene,	Let's go, my love.
A ristorar le pene d'un innocente amor. And make up for our pain with an innocent love.	

17. Donde lieta usci

Here is another aria from Puccini's *La Boheme*. Here, the heroine, the poor seamstress Mimi, tells her lover, the jealous poet Rodolfo, that they need to stop seeing each other. In *Donde lieta*, she asks him to send her the little things she's left in his garret, and she asks that they part as friends.

Donde lieta usci al tuo grido d'amore, torna sola Mimì al solitario nido. Ritorna un'altra volta a intesser finti fior. Addio, senza rancor.	From here (where) she happily left To (follow) the sound of your cry of love, Mimi returns alone To her solitary nest. She returns once again To weave together false flowers. Goodbye, without resentment.
Ascolta, ascolta. Le poche robe aduna che lasciasti sparse. Nel mio cassetto stan chiusi quel cerchietto d'or e il libro di preghiere. Involgi tutto quanto in un grembiale e manderò il portiere...	Listen, listen. The little things gather That I have left scattered about In my drawer Are enclosed that gold band (bracelet?) And the prayer book. Wrap everything in a smock And I will send someone for them...
Bada, sotto il guanciale c'è la cuffietta rosa. Se vuoi serbarla a ricordo d'amor! Addio, senza rancor.	Pay attention, on the pillow There is a pink bonnet If you want, keep it as a memory of love! Goodbye, without resentment.

18. Piangerò, la sorte mia

George Frideric Handel was born in Germany in 1685. The Duke of the local court in which Handel was brought up took notice of the boy's musical talent and persuaded Handel's father to give him a solid musical education, which he did.

In Handel's opera *Giulio Cesare* (or *Julius Caesar*), which premiered in 1724, Cleopatra is a multifaceted character. She uses her womanly wiles to seduce Caesar, which in Italian is pronounced "Cesare," gains the throne of Egypt, and then becomes totally engaged in a love affair with Caesar. She has great arias of immense dramatic intensity, including this one, *Piangerò la sorte mia*, in English *I shall lament my fate*. Here Cleopatra's army has been defeated, she has been taken prisoner by her own brother, and she is sick with worry that Caesar that has been killed. (Not a good day.)

E pur così in un giorno
perdo fasti e grandezze? Ahi fato rio!
Cesare, il mio bel nume, è forse estinto;
Cornelia e Sesto inermi son, né sanno
darmi soccorso. O dio!
Non resta alcuna speme al viver mio.
Piangerò la sorte mia,
sì crudele e tanto ria,
finché vita in petto avrò.
Ma poi morta d'ogn'intorno
il tiranno e notte e giorno
fatta spettro agiterò.
Piangerò ecc.

Thus, in a single day,
Must I lose ceremony and greatness ? Alas, wicked fate!
Caesar, my godlike beloved, is probably dead,
Cornelia and Sextus are defenseless
And cannot come to my aid. O god!
There is no hope left (to my life).
I shall lament my fate,
So cruel and so pitiless,
As long as I have breath in my breast.
But when I am dead, wherever he goes,
Tyranny, night and day,
Everywhere I will agitate.

19. A la luz de la luna

This song, composed by Anton y Michelena, was written in 1918 and recorded by the legendary Italian tenor Enrico Caruso. This arrangement was done by A. Fassio in 1932.

A la luz de la luna yo te mire
Y al mirarte divina, me enamore y al mirarte,
mi vida, Yo me enamore...
Ay, corazon,
Dime si estas enferma de tanto amor.
Ay, corazon,
Ya no curaras nunca por tanto olvido de tanto amor.

By the night, at the light of the moon I will look at you
And you look divine, I will fall in love and to look at you,
my love, I will fall in love...
Oh, heart,
Tell me if you are sick from so much love.
Oh, heart,
Still there is no cure to forget such love.

20. Climb Ev'ry Mountain

Climb Ev'ry Mountain is from the musical *The Sound of Music*, with music by Richard Rodgers and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II. It's based on Maria von Trapp's book The Story of the Trapp Family Singers. The original Broadway production opened in 1959. It was the final musical written by Rodgers and Hammerstein, as Hammerstein died of cancer nine months after the premiere. The story takes place in the Salzburg, Austria, just before WWII. This song is sung to Maria by the Mother Abbess.

Climb ev'ry mountain, search high and low.
Follow ev'ry byway, ev'ry path you know.
Climb ev'ry mountain, ford ev'ry stream,
Follow ev'ry rainbow til you find your dream.
A dream that will need all the love you can give,
Every day of your life, for as long as you live.
Climb ev'ry mountain, ford ev'ry stream,
Follow ev'ry rainbow til you find your dream.

21. O mio babbino caro

Gianni Schicchi is an opera in one act by Giacomo Puccini. It is often performed in a trio of one-act operas known as *Il Trittico*, and it is the only comedy. It premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in 1918.

The libretto is based on a story referred to in Dante's *The Divine Comedy* and a work entitled *Commentary on The Divine Comedy by an Anonymous Florentine of the 14th Century*, first published in

1866. In this famous aria, Gianni Schicci's daughter Lauretta wants his permission to marry the poor Rinuccio. She knows she has her father wrapped around her little finger. She pleads with him sweetly and dramatically, and she gets her way. In 1986, the aria found its way into popular culture when Dame Kiri Te Kanawa's recording of the aria was used in the opening of the movie *A Room with a View*.

O mio babbino caro,
Mi piace e bello, bello!
Vo' andare in Porta Rossa,
A comperar l'anello.
Sì, sì! Ci voglio andare.
E se l'amassi indarno,
Andrei sul Ponte Vecchio,
Ma per buttarmi in Arno.
Mi struggo e mi tormento!
O Dio, vorrei morir.
Babbo, pietà, pietà.

Oh my dearest little daddy,
My love is so handsome, handsome!
I want to go to Porta Rossa
To buy the ring.
Yes, yes! I want to go.
And if my pleading is in vain,
I will go to the Ponte Vecchio (Old Bridge),
To throw myself in the Arno (River).
My struggle and my torment!
Oh God, I wish I could die.
Daddy, take pity, take pity.