

Opera Choruses Programme Pronunciation Guide

Handel: Chorus of the Enchanted Islanders (from Alcina)

Questo è il cielo de' contenti,	kwes-toe ay eel chello day kon-ten-tee	Hear is the heaven of all happiness
questo è il centro del goder;	kwes-toe ay eel chen-tro del go-dair	Here is the centre of joy
qui è l'Eliso de' viventi,	kwee ay lay-lee-zo day vee-ven-tee	Here is a living elysium
qui l'eroi forma il piacer.	kwee lay-roy for-mah eel pee-a-chair	Where heroes are shaped by pleasure

Sullivan/Gilbert: Buon'giorno Signorine (from The Gondoliers)

Buon'giorno, signorine	bwon-joor-no see-nyoor-ee-nay	Good morning ladies!
Gondolieri carissimi!	gon-doe-lee-air-ee kar-ee-see-mee	Dear gondoliers!
Siamo contadine!	see-yah-mo kon-tah-dee-nay	We are but peasant girls!
servitori umilissimi!	sair-vee-tor-ee oo-mee-lee-see-mee	We are but most humble servants!
Per chi questi fiori bellissimi?	pair kee kwes-tee fee-or-ee bel-ee-see-mee	Who are these beautiful flowers for?
Per voi, bei signori, O eccellentissimi!	pair voy bay see-nyoor-ee oh eh-chel-len-tee-see-mee	For you, dear gentlemen!
O ciel!	oh chel	Oh heavens!
Buon'giorno, cavalieri	bwon-joor-no ka-va-lee-air-ee	Good morning gentlemen
Siamo gondolieri / poveri gondolieri	see-yah-mo gon-doe-lee-air-ee poe-veh-ree gon-doe-lee-air-ee	We are gondoliers, but poor gondoliers
Signorine / contadine / cavalieri / gondolieri	See-nyoor-ee-nay / kon-tah-dee-nay / ka-va-lee-air-ee / gon-do-lee-air-ee	Ladies / peasant girls / gentlemen / gondoliers

Verdi: Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves (from Nabucco)

Va', pensiero, sull'ali dorate;	vah pen-syair-oh sul-al-lee do-rah-tay	Go, thoughts, on golden wings;
Va, ti posa sui clivi, sui colli,	vah tee poh-sah swee klee-vee swee kol-ee	Go, settle upon the slopes and hills,
ove olezzano tepide e molli	oh-vay oh-leh-zah-no teh-pee-day ay mo-lee	where warm and soft and fragrant are
l'aure dolci del suolo natal!	laow-ray dol-chee del swoh-lo na-tal	the breezes of our sweet native land!
Del Giordano le rive saluta,	del djoor-dah-no lay ree-vay sa-loo-tah	Greet the banks of the Jordan,
di Sionne le torri atterrate	dee see-on-nay lay to-ree a-teh-rah-tay	the towers of Zion
Oh mia Patria sì bella e perduta!	oh mee-ah pah-tree-a see bel-la ay pair-doo-tah	Oh my country so beautiful and lost!
O membranza sì cara e fatal!	oh mem-bran-za see ka-ra ay fa-tal	Or so dear yet unhappy!
Arpa d'or dei fatidici vati,	ar-pa door day-ee fa-tee-dee-chee va-tee	Or harp of the prophetic seers,
perché muta dal salice pendi?	pair-kay moo-ta dal sa-lee-chay pen-dee	why do you hang silent from the willows?
Le memorie nel petto raccendi,	lay mem-or-ree-ay nel pe-to ra-chen-dee	Rekindle the memories within our hearts,
ci favella del tempo che fu!	chee fa-vell-ah del tem-po kay foo	tell us about the time that have gone by

O simile di Solima ai fati, traggi un suono di crudo lamento; o t'ispiri il Signore un concerto che ne infonda al patire virtù!	oh see-mee-lay dee soh-lee-ma ayee fa-tee tra-jee un swo-no dee kroo-do la-men-to oh tee-spee-ree eel see-nyoor-ay un kon-chen-to kay nay in-fon-da al pa-tee-ray veer-too	Or similar to the fate of Solomon, give a sound of lament; or let the Lord inspire a concert That may give to endure our suffering.
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Verdi: Soldiers Chorus (from Il Trovatore)

Squilli, echeggi la tromba guerriera, Chiami all'armi, alla pugna, all'assalto; Fia domani la nostra bandiera Di quei merli piantata sull'alto. No, giammai non sorrise vittoria Di più liete speranze finor!... Ivi l'util ci aspetta e la gloria, Ivi opimi la preda e l'onor.	skwee-lee eh-keh-djee la trom-ba gweh-ree-air-ah kee-a-mee al-ar-mee a-la poo-nya al a-sal-to fee-a do-mah-nee la no-stra ban-dee-air-ah dee kway-ee mair-lee pyan-tah-tah sul-al-toe no djee-am-eye non so-ree-say vee-tor-ee-a dee pee-oo lee-eh-teh spe-ran-zay fee-nor ee-vee loo-teel chee a-spe-ta ay la gloor-ee-a ee-vee o-pee-mee la pray-da ay low-nor	Let the warlike trumpet sound and echo, call to arms, to the fray, the attack may our flag be planted tomorrow on the highest of those towers No, victory has never smiled on happier hopes than ours There fame and glory awaits us There waits spoil, booty and honour
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Bizet: Habanera (from Carmen)

L'amour est un oiseau rebelle Que nul ne peut apprivoiser, Et c'est bien en vain qu'on l'appelle S'il lui convient de refuser.	la-moor eh-tun wa-soe Ruh-bel-uh kuh newl nuh puh-ta-pRee-vwa-zay ay say byan on van kon la-pe-luh see lwee kon-vyan duh Ruh-few-zay	Love, she's a rebellious bird That nobody can tame And it really is no use to call her If she doesn't want to come
Rien n'y fait, menace ou prière. L'un parle bien, l'autre se tait. Et c'est l'autre que je préfère. Il n'a rien dit mais il me plait.	Ree-an nee fay muh-nas oo pRee-air-uh lun par-luh byan low-tRuh suh tay ay say low-tRuh kuh juh pRay-fair-uh eel na Ree-an dee may eel muh play	Neither threats nor pleading; nothing works The first means you need to speak, the other doesn't it's the other that I prefer Although it remains silent, it's good to me
L'amour! L'amour! L'amour! L'amour!	la-moor etc	Love! Love! Love! Love!
L'amour est enfant de Bohême, Il n'a jamais jamais connu de loi. Si tu ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime. Si je t'aime, prends garde à toi!	la-moor eht on-fon duh bow-ehm eel na ja-may ja-may ko-nu duh lwa see too nuh meh-muh pa juh teh-muh see juh teh-muh pRon gaar-da twa	Love is a gypsy's child, it has never, ever, known a law; If you love me not, then I love you; If I love you, you'd best beware!

Si tu ne m'aimes pas, si tu ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime,	see too nuh meh-muh pa see too nuh meh-muh pa juh teh-muh
Mais si je t'aime, si je t'aime, prends garde à toi!	may see juh teh-muh see juh teh-muh pRon gaard a twa

L'oiseau que tu croyais surprendre	lwa-soe kuh too kwoy-ay sur-pRon-dRuh	The bird you thought you had caught
Battit de l'aile et s'envola.	ba-tee duh lie ay son-vo-la	Flapped its wings and flew away
L'amour est loin, tu peux l'attendre.	la-moor ay lwan too puh la-ton-dRuh	Love stays away, you wait and wait;
Tu ne l'attends plus, il est là.	too nuh la-ton plew eel ay la	When least expected, there it is!
Tout autour de toi, vite vite,	toot oh-tour duh twa vee-tuh vee-tuh	All around you, swift, so swift,
Il vient, s'en va, puis il revient.	eel vee-yan son va pwee eel ruh-vyan	It comes, it goes and then comes back
Tu crois le tenir, il t'évite.	too kwa luh tuh-near eel tay-vee-tuh	You think you hold it fast then it flies away
Tu crois l'éviter, il te tient.	too kwa lay-vee-tay eel tuh tyan	You think you're free, then it comes back to hold you

L'amour! L'amour! L'amour! L'amour!	la-moor etc	Love! Love! Love! Love!
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L'amour est enfant de Bohême,	la-moor eht on-fon duh bow-ehm	Love is a gypsy's child,
Il n'a jamais jamais connu de loi.	eel na ja-may ja-may ko-nu duh lwa	it has never, ever, known a law;
Si tu ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime.	see too nuh meh-muh pa juh teh-muh	If you love me not, then I love you;
Si je t'aime, prends garde à toi!	see juh teh-muh pRon gaar-da twa	If I love you, you'd best beware! etc.

Si tu ne m'aimes pas, si tu ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime,	see too nuh meh-muh pa, see too nuh meh-muh pa juh teh-muh
Mais si je t'aime, si je t'aime, prends garde à toi!	may see juh teh-muh see juh teh-muh pRon gaard a twa

NB – 'R' here indicates guttural R sound (i.e. sound produced in the throat), 'uh' = schwa sound (imagine the 'uh' sound at the end of the word 'the')