

Only the Strings 'sing' - Great Opera Tunes!

*(Hollywood Bowl,
Capitol, Mantovani
Orchestras)*

19 Favourites:

Carmen
La Bohème
La Traviata
Madame Butterfly
Barber of Seville
Rigoletto
Turandot
Samson & Delilah
Tales of Hoffmann
& more...



alto
Take: 2

Only the Strings "Sing" — Great Opera Tunes

[1]	Giacomo Puccini: <i>Gianni Schicchi</i> - O mio babbino caro	2:31
[2]	Giuseppe Verdi: <i>La Traviata</i> - Libiamo!	2:53
[3]	Gioachino Rossini: <i>Il barbiere di Siviglia</i> - Largo al factotum	4:44
[4]	Charles Gounod: <i>Faust</i> - Déposons les armes "Soldiers' Chorus"	3:46
[5]	Ruggero Leoncavallo: <i>I Pagliacci</i> - Vesti la giubba	3:46
[6]	Verdi: <i>Rigoletto</i> - La donna e mobile	2:04
[7]	Puccini: <i>Turandot</i> - Nessun dorma	3:02
[8]	Richard Wagner: <i>Tannhäuser</i> - Beglückt' darf nun dich "Pilgrims' Chorus"	4:05
[9]	Camille Saint-Saëns: <i>Samson et Dalila</i> - Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix	4:23
[10]	Verdi: <i>La Traviata</i> - Amami Alfredo	2:22
	Georges Bizet: <i>Carmen</i>	2:49
[11]	L'amour est un oiseau rebelle "Habanera"	2:49
[12]	Votre toast, je peux vous le rendre "Toreador Song"	3:47
[13]	Jacques Offenbach: <i>Les Contes d'Hoffmann</i> - Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour "Barcarolle"	4:03
	Puccini: <i>Madama Butterfly</i>	
[14]	Vogliatemi bene "Love Duet"	8:22
[15]	Un bel dì, vedremo	4:33
[16]	Con onor muore "Butterfly's Farewell"	5:33
	Puccini: <i>La Bohème</i>	10:03
[17]	Che gelida manina... O soave fanciulla "Love Scene"	10:03
[18]	Quando me'n vo' "Musetta's Waltz"	2:30
[19]	Addio, dolce svegliare "Mimi's Farewell"	4:25

Mantovani and His Orchestra ([1], [7], [11])

Carmen Dragon and the Capitol Symphony Orchestra ([2]-[6], [9]-[10], [12], [15], [18])

Carmen Dragon and the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra ([8])

Herbert von Karajan and the Philharmonia Orchestra ([13])

Alfred Newman and the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra ([14], [16]-[17], [19])

In Giacomo Puccini's opera *Gianni Schicchi*, the title character is persuaded by his daughter Lauretta, in her aria ***O mio babbino caro*** (O my beloved daddy), to impersonate a recently-dead relation of her fiancé, who has left his fortune to the church, and to dictate a new will that would be more advantageous to his family. However, in his version, the wily old man bequeaths everything to himself.

The first act of Giuseppe Verdi's *La traviata* takes place in the salon of the courtesan Violetta Valéry (the 'fallen woman', that is *la traviata*, of the opera's title), where a party is taking place and a *Brindisi* (***libiamo, libiamo***), or drinking song, is being sung. Although, of all her suitors, Violetta really does love Alfredo, she is persuaded by his father to leave him (***Amami Alfredo***). The two are finally re-united but it is too late as Violetta is by then dying of consumption.

On his first appearance in Gioachino Rossini's opera *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Figaro, in his aria ***Largo al factotum***, introduces himself and explains that he is not only the Barber of Seville but the city's general factotum, always at everybody's beck and call. Apart from trimming beards and cutting hair, he is also a surgeon of sorts and will serenade the ladies with his guitar in the evening on behalf of their shy suitors.

In his operatic version of the *Faust* story, Charles Gounod chose to concentrate on the relationship between Faust and Marguerite. Having been shown a vision of Marguerite by Méphistophélès, Faust is persuaded to give up his soul in exchange for eternal youth. Later, encouraged by Méphistophélès, Faust kills Marguerite's brother, Valentin, who has just returned from the war to the sound of the Soldiers' Chorus - ***Gloire immortelle***.

Ruggero Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* (The Clowns) takes place in a village in Calabria where a group of strolling players is about to perform a play in which the passions of love and hatred are inextricably combined as indeed they are amongst the players themselves. Although, he has just been betrayed by his wife and his heart is breaking, Canio, realizes that the show must go on and he

should change into his costume - ***Vesti la giubba*** (On with the motley).

Verdi's Rigoletto is the Duke of Mantua's jester and he knows well his master's predilection for beautiful young ladies. Having an attractive daughter of his own called Gilda, Rigoletto is keen to keep her away from the Duke whose belief is that all women are fickle - ***La donna é mobile***. However, when he fails to do so, Rigoletto hires an assassin to kill the Duke who ends up stabbing Gilda by mistake.

Puccini's opera *Turandot* is set in Peking in ancient times and the Princess of that name has proclaimed that she will take as her husband only a man of royal blood who can solve three riddles; any suitor who fails to do so will be put to death. Even though he is able to solve the riddles, Prince Calaf tells how Turandot has decreed that 'none shall sleep' (***Nessun dorma***) until she discovers who he is.

The knight Tannhäuser in Richard Wagner's opera has been lured into the Venusberg by the Goddess of Love but he soon wearies of her. Back in the real world is Elisabeth, who is in love with him, and his friend Wolfram von Eschenbach, who is in love with Elisabeth but is willing to give her up to Tannhäuser. In disgrace for singing about Venus, Tannhäuser later travels to Rome to seek forgiveness from the Pope, accompanied by the singing of the ***Pilgrims' Chorus***.

The opera *Samson et Dalila* by Camille Saint-Saëns tells the Biblical story of the seduction and destruction by a Philistine woman of the great leader of the people of Israel. Samson is torn between his hatred of the Philistines, who have conquered his own people, and his fascination for this provocative temptress. Eventually, however, by the time she has finished her aria ***Softly awakes my heart***, Samson has succumbed completely to her charms.

Georges Bizet's opera *Carmen* tells of a gypsy who works in a cigarette factory in Seville and of the two men who fall in love with her. In her ***Habanera*** (*L'amour est un oiseau rebelle*) Carmen flirts with Don José, a corporal in the Dragoons, but soon rejects him in

favour of the famous bullfighter, Escamillo, who arrives on the scene as the crowd sings the **Toreador Song**. However, all will not end happily for this trio, as the spurned Don José will stab Carmen to death at the end of the opera before she can witness Escamillo's latest triumph in the bullring.

The three tales of Hoffmann that Jacques Offenbach chose for his opera deal with the three loves in Hoffmann's life. The first is Olympia, the robot-like doll created by the scientist Dr Coppélius, the second is a beautiful, but dying, singer called Antonia and the third, a Venetian courtesan called Giulietta. For the last of these tales the scene is set in a palace overlooking the Grand Canal in Venice outside which, in a gondola, a **Barcarolle** (Venetian folk song) is being sung.

When Cio-Cio-San, or Butterfly as she is known to her friends, marries Lieutenant Pinkerton while he is stationed with the US Navy in Nagasaki, she considers it a love match while he sees it as a temporary affair which will end when he returns to the USA. In the second act of Puccini's opera, Butterfly, who by then has given birth to their son, expresses her longing for Pinkerton's return in her aria **Un bel dì** (One fine day). When he does finally return, with his American wife, Pinkerton decides to take the child back to the USA with them. Distraught, Cio-Cio-San, in time-honoured Japanese fashion, uses her father's sword to kill herself.

Puccini's *La bohème* tells of a group of Bohemians who live in the Latin Quarter of Paris. On Christmas Eve, when the others have gone out, the poet, Rodolfo, hears a voice outside on the landing. It is that of a young woman, known as Mimì whose candle has gone out and who has dropped her key. While searching for it in the darkness, Rodolfo takes hold of her hand and finds it to be very cold ('*your tiny hand is frozen*'). Seeing her face in the moonlight he soon realizes that he is falling in love. When they join the others outside they find also Musetta who entertains them with her **Waltz Song**. All is not well, however, for like Violetta, Mimì is a victim of consumption and will die before the opera ends.

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Carmen Dragon (1914-84) was born in Antioch, California, the son of Italian immigrants. He showed extraordinary musical talents in his youth, and had mastered the piano, string bass, accordion, trumpet and trombone by the time he graduated from high school. During the 1940s Dragon garnered a reputation as a top-flight pop music conductor, and composed scores for several films, including "Night into Morning" (1951), "At Gunpoint" (1955), and "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" (1956). It was also during this period that he became a frequent conductor of the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra. Through the 1950s and '60s Dragon recorded nearly 80 albums for Capitol Records with the Hollywood Bowl, Royal Philharmonic and Capitol orchestras. During the last two decades of his life he served as music director of the Glendale Symphony Orchestra. He died of cancer at age 69.

Born to Russian-Jewish parents who had recently emigrated to America, **Alfred Newman** (1900- 70) started to learn the piano at the age of five and was soon being hailed as a prodigy. He was eventually to become a conductor in New York City and then, in Hollywood. Newman was one of the film industry's busiest music-makers, scoring more than 300 films in his 40-year career, including the original score for "The Song of Bernadette" and orchestrations for "Carousel" and "Camelot". His nine Academy Awards for music is a record that stands unsurpassed.

Known professionally simply by his surname, **Annunzio Paolo Mantovani** (1905-80) was born to Italian parents in Venice. He moved with his family to England in 1912, where he was to study at Trinity College of Music in London. He formed his own orchestra after graduating and, by the time World War II broke out, he was directing one of the most popular British dance bands, which developed into his world-famous light music orchestra. At the end of World War II he became Noël Coward's music director. Known as the "King of Strings" during his heyday, Mantovani made over 50 LP recordings for Decca, with at least 18 being certified as "gold records" in the United States.

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