

## Giuseppe Verdi – Otello (Pavarotti, Te Kanawa)

Written by bluesever

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CD1 1. *Otello / Act 1 - Una vela! Una vela!* 2. *Otello / Act 1 - Esultate!* 3. *Otello / Act 1 - Roderigo, ebbene che pensi?* 4. *Otello / Act 1 - Fuoco di gioia!* 5. *Otello / Act 1 - Roderigo, beviam!* 6. *Otello / Act 1 - Inaffia l'ugola! Trinca, tracanna (Brindisi)* 7. *Otello / Act 1 - Capitano, v'attende la fazione ai baluardi* 8. *Otello / Act 1 - Abbasso le spade!* 9. *Otello / Act 1 - Già nella notte densa... Venga la morte* 10. *Otello / Act 2 - Non ti crucciar* 11. *Otello / Act 2 - Vanne! la tua meta già vedo* 12. *Otello / Act 2 - Credo in un Dio crudel* 13. *Otello / Act 2 - Ciò m'accora* 14. *Otello / Act 2 - Dove guardi splendono* 15. *Otello / Act 2 - D'un uom che geme sotto il tuo disdegno* 16. *Otello / Act 2 - Se inconscia, contro te, sposo, ho peccato* 17. *Otello / Act 2 - Desdemona rea!* 18. *Otello / Act 2 - Tu?! Indietro! fuggi!* 19. *Otello / Act 2 - Ora e per sempre addio* 20. *Otello / Act 2 - Pace, signor* 21. *Otello / Act 2 - Era la notte, Cassio dormia* 22. *Otello / Act 2 - Oh! mostruosa colpa!... Ah! mille vite* 23. *Otello / Act 2 - Sì, pel ciel marmoreo giuro!*

CD2 1. *Otello / Act 3 - La vedetta del porto* 2. *Otello / Act 3 - Continua* 3. *Otello / Act 3 - Dio ti giocondi, o sposo* 4. *Otello / Act 3 - Esterrefatto fisso* 5. *Otello / Act 3 - Dio! mi potevi scagliar* 6. *Otello / Act 3 - Cassio è là!* 7. *Otello / Act 3 - Vieni; l'aula è deserta* 8. *Otello / Act 3 - ...e intanto, giacchè non si stanca mai* 9. *Otello / Act 3 - Quest'è il segnale* 10. *Otello / Act 3 - Il Doge ed il Senato salutano* 11. *Otello / Act 3 - Messeri! Il Doge* 12. *Otello / Act 3 - A terra!... sì... nel livido fango* 13. *Otello / Act 3 - Quell' innocente un fremito* 14. *Otello / Act 3 - Fuggite!* 15. *Otello / Act 4 - Era più calmo?* 16. *Otello / Act 4 - Mia madre aveva una povera ancella* 17. *Otello / Act 4 - "Piangea cantando nell'erma landa..."* 18. *Otello / Act 4 - Ave Maria, piena di grazia* 19. *Otello / Act 4 - (Otello compare)* 20. *Otello / Act 4 - Diceste questa sera le vostre preci?* 21. *Otello / Act 4 - Aprite! Aprite!* 22. *Otello / Act 4 - Niun mi tema*

Otello - Luciano Pavarotti Desdemona - Kiri Te Kanawa Iago - Leo Nucci Cassio - Anthony Rolfe Johnson Emilia - Elzbieta Ardam Ludovico - Dimitri Kavrakos Montano - Alan Opie Roderigo - John Keyes Chicago Symphony Orchestra Chicago Symphony Chorus Sir Georg Solti – conductor

As forgiving as the world was to the great Pavarotti, this Otello was ill-advised on his part. The voice and interpretation are completely off track--having a big lyric tenor still puts you in the category of a lyric tenor, not a heroic one. Pavarotti knew it, and he went through the experience with maximum anxiety. I happened to talk to the overseer of the project from the

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CSO's side, and he called it the biggest headache (actually, he used a stronger word) in his long career. I eagerly bought this prestige Otello when it first appeared in 1991 and found myself cringing, primarily because of Pavarotti, but Leo Nucci joins Aldo Protti in the roster of bad Iago's who try to bluster their way through a part they cannot actually sing.

Te Kanawa made a specialty of Desdemona, as have many Mozart-Strauss sopranos whose lyric voices are on the strong side. She's not Italianate in style, which didn't seem to bother adoring audiences -- sheer beauty of voice will get you a long way. But for me the memorable Desdemonas have been real Verdi-Puccini singers like Freni, the singer I turn to in this role on records. Te Kanawa and Pavarotti don't walk through their parts like preening stars, but their performances are certainly concert bound; you won't find yourself transported to La Scala on opening night. As for Solti, whose experience in opera was as extensive as Bohm's or Karajan's, I have no argument with his conducting, or with the superb Chicago Sym.

At the time the Gramophone bent over backwards to plead on behalf of Pavarotti as a "sincere and serious musician," asking readers to forget his larger-than-life pop persona. The reviewer claimed that the tenor was in best voice by the time he made his recording in Carnegie Hall after a nerve-racking Chicago debut. Let's grant all of that, however doubtfully. To my ears he sounds like what he was, an aging superstar tenor who was goaded into undertaking a role he didn't know and put very little effort in, besides hauling out his well-honed (and considerable) professional skills. --- Santa Fe Listener, amazon.com

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