

## **La Sonnambula**

[Grand opera, in two acts; text by Romani. Produced for the first time in Milan, March 6, 1831; in London, at the King's Theatre, July 28, 1831; in Paris, October 28, 1831; in New York, May 14, 1842.]

### PERSONAGES.

Amina, ward of the miller's wife. Elvino, a landholder. Rodolfo, lord of the village. Lisa, innkeeper. Alessio, a peasant, lover of Lisa. Teresa, mistress of the mill.

The scene is laid in Switzerland; time, last century.

The first act of the opera opens with the preparations for the marriage of Amina and Elvino. Lisa, the mistress of the inn, is also in love with Elvino and jealous of Amina. On the day before the wedding, Rodolfo, the young lord of the village, arrives to look after his estates, and puts up at the inn, where he meets Amina. He pays her many pretty compliments, much to the dissatisfaction of Elvino, who is inclined to quarrel with him. After Rodolfo retires to his chamber, Amina, who is addicted to sleep-walking, enters the room and throws herself upon the bed as if it were her own. She is seen not only by Rodolfo, but also by Lisa, who has been vainly seeking to captivate him. To escape the embarrassment of the situation, Rodolfo quietly goes out; but the malicious Lisa hastens to inform Elvino of what Amina has done, at the same time thoughtlessly leaving her handkerchief in Rodolfo's room. Elvino rushes to the spot with other villagers, finds Amina as Lisa had described, denounces her, and offers himself to the latter.

In the last act Amina is seen stepping from the window of the mill in her sleep. She crosses a frail bridge above the mill wheel, descends in safety, and walks into Elvino's arms amid the jubilant songs of the villagers. Elvino at last is convinced of her innocence, while the

discovery of Lisa's handkerchief in Rodolfo's room proclaims her the faithless one.

The little pastoral story is of the simplest kind, but it is set to music as melodious as ever has come from an Italian composer, and the rôle of the heroine has engaged the services of nearly all the great artists of the nineteenth century from Malibran to Patti. Its most striking melodies are the aria "Sovra il sen" ("On my Heart your Hand do place"), in the third scene of the first act, where Amina declares her happiness; the aria for baritone in the sixth scene, "Vi ravviso" ("I recognize you, Pleasant Spot"), sung by Rodolfo; the playful duet, "Mai piu dubbi" ("Away with Doubts"), in which Amina chides her lover for his jealousy; the humorous and characteristic chorus of the villagers in the tenth scene, "Osservate, l'uscio è aperto" ("Observe, the Door is open"), as they tiptoe into the chamber; the duet in the next scene, "O mio dolor" ("Oh, my Sorrow"), in which Amina asserts her innocence; the aria for tenor in the third scene of the second act, "Tutto e sciolto" ("Every Tie is broken"), in which Elvino bemoans his hard lot; and that joyous outburst of birdlike melody, "Ah! non giunge" ("Human Thought cannot conceive"), which closes the opera.