

“Chi il bel sogno” (Doretta’s lovely dream) LA RONDINE (The Swallow) Act I, Giacomo Puccini, with a libretto by Giuseppe Adami (Italian), taken from a German libretto by A.M.Wilner and H. Reichart; 1917.

SYNOPSIS: At a lavish party, Magda takes over from her friend, the poet Prunier, who is attempting in vain to finish a song he has just composed but cannot finish. As she improvises, she realizes her close affinity with “Doretta” and her dream.

MAGDA

Chi il bel sogno di Doretta  
potè indovinar?  
Il suo mister come mai  
come mai fini ?

Who could ever guess the meaning  
of Doretta’s dream?  
And how its mystery ever,  
how it ever ends?

Ahimè! un giorno uno studente  
in bocca la baciò,  
e fu quel bacio  
rivelazione:  
fu la passione!

Alas! One day, a handsome student  
kissed her on the lips,  
and what a revelation  
was that kiss!  
It was pure passion!

Folle amore!  
Folle ebbrezza!  
Chi la sottil carezza  
d'un bacio così ardente  
mai ridir potrà?

Unbridled loving!  
Maddest ecstasy!  
Who could ever describe them--  
the subtle wild caresses  
of such an ardent kiss?

Ah! mio sogno!  
Ah! mia vita!  
Che importa la ricchezza  
se alfine è rifiorita  
la felicità!  
O sogno d'or  
poter amar così!

Ah, like her, I dream!  
Ah, like her, I live!  
What use are empty riches  
if happiness could flower  
as it did before?  
Oh golden dream,  
to be in love that way!

--From “Puccini, Master of Melody,” a course for Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, (OLLI) at UCSC, ©2017