

“Pays merveilleux...O paradis” (Marvelous country...Oh, paradise) French version, l’AFRICAINNE (The African Woman) Act IV, Giacomo Meyerbeer, libretto by Eugène Scribe, 1865

SYNOPSIS:

During his explorations, Vasco da Gama has been captured by natives on Queen Selika’s island. They are about to execute him when she saves his life by declaring that he is her husband. Amazed at the beauty of his surroundings, da Gama revels in this “paradise” and its potential riches for his native land.

VASCO DA GAMA

Pays merveilleux,
jardin fortune,
temple radieux,
salut!

Marvelous country,
beautiful garden,
radiant temple,
all hail!

O, paradis, sorti de l’onde,
ciel si bleu, ciel si pure,
dont mes yeux sont ravis,

Oh, paradise, arisen from the waves,
azure sky, purest sky,
which captivates my eyes,

tu m’appartiens, oh, nouveau monde,
dont j’aurai doté, dont j’aurai doté
mon pays.

you belong to me, oh, newfound world,
which I will bestow, yes, I will bestow
on my country.

À nous, tes campagnes vermeilles.

Your vermilion meadows are ours;

À nous ce trésor retrouvé.

This discovered treasure is ours.

O, trésor charmant, o, merveille,

Oh, charming treasure, oh, marvel!

Salut! monde nouveau, tu m’appartiens. All hail! Newfound world, you belong to me.

Sois donc à moi, sois donc à moi!

Be mine alone, be mine alone!

À moi, o, beau pays.

Be mine, oh, lovely land.

O, nouveau monde, sois donc à moi,

Oh, newfound world, be mine alone,

À moi, à moi!

Be mine, be mine!

--From “Bel canto, the French Connection,” course for Lifelong Learners at UC Santa Cruz, 2010