

“Prenderò quel brunettino” (I’ll take that handsome dark one) COSI FAN TUTTE (All Women are like that), Act II, duet; music by W.A. Mozart, libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte, 1790

SYNOPSIS: Dorabella and Fiordiligi, two upper-class sisters, are engaged to Ferrando and Guglielmo respectively. A cynical bachelor, Don Alonso, bets the two young men that since “all women are like that” (i.e., fickle), their fiancées would quickly change their minds if properly wooed by two “strangers.” He convinces Ferrando and Guglielmo to disguise themselves as Albanian soldiers and each seems to be successful in gaining the affections of the other sister, at least, so it appears. In this duet, in the absence of their fiancés, the sisters decide to explore possibilities with the strangers...

DORABELLA

Prenderò quel brunettino,  
Che più lepido mi par.

FIORDILIGI

Ed intanto io col biondino  
Vo' un po' ridere e burlar.

DORABELLA

Scherzosetta ai dolci detti  
Io di quel risponderò.

FIORDILIGI

Sospirando i sospiretti  
Io dell'altro imiterò.

DORABELLA

Mi dirà: «Ben mio, mi moro».

FIORDILIGI

Mi dirà: «Mio bel tesoro».

FIORDILIGI E DORABELLA

Ed intanto che diletto,  
che spassetto io proverò!

DORABELLA

I’ll take that handsome dark one,  
who seems very smart to me..

FIORDILIGI

I prefer the amusing blond one,  
who can make me laugh, I see.

DORABELLA

I’ll be playful and with banter  
answer all his loving words.

FIORDILIGI

I’ll by sighing in replying  
when the other sighs at me.

DORABELLA

He will say, “Oh, my love, I’m dying!”

FIORDILIGI

He will say, “You’re a pretty treasure!”

BOTH

In the meantime, what great pleasure,  
I’ll be happy as can be!

From a lecture, “Variations on a Theme: Familial love in Opera”, Osher Lifelong Learners (OLLI) ©2017, Miriam Ellis