

“Ch’ella mi creda libero” (Let her believe me free), Act III, LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST, 1910, music by Giacomo Puccini, libretto by Guelfo Civinini and Carlo Zangarini, based on the play, “The Girl of the Golden West,” by David Belasco.

SYNOPSIS: In a rough mining town of the Old West, Minnie is revered and very helpful to the miners. When she falls in love with Dick Johnson (who is also known as the bandit, Ramerrez), for a time, she protects him from the sheriff who wants to arrest him but finally Ramerrez is caught and about to be hanged. He pleads with the miners not to tell Minnie the truth about his fate.**

DICK JOHNSON (RAMERREZ): (*about to be hanged*)

Ch'ella mi creda	Let her believe me
libero e lontano,	free and far from danger,
Sopra una nuova via	taking a newfound pathway
di redenzione!	to find redemption!
Aspetterà ch'io torni	She'll wait for me and my returning,
* E passeranno i giorni,	*and days will pass in yearning,
*ed io, io *non tornerò...	*and I will not return here..
Minnie, della mia vita,	Minnie, in all my years of living,
mio solo fiore.	my only flower.
Minnie, che m'hai voluto tanto bene!	Minnie, who really *loved me truly!
Ah! tu della mia vita	Ah, you, in all my lifetime,
mio solo fior!	my only love!

*(repeat)

**Note: Minnie arrives (traditionally on horseback) at the last minute, and saves her beloved, with the assent of the miners.

From a lecture for the Santa Cruz Opera Society, Inc. (SCOSI), “Puccini’s Heroines”
© Miriam Ellis, 1998