

“Ecco! respiro appena...Io son l’umile ancella”(Listen...I’m scarcely breathing... I’m but the humble servant) ADRIANA LECOUVREUR, Act I, music by Francesco Cilea; libretto by Arturo Colautti, 1902; based on the play, *Adrienne Lecouvreur* by Eugène Scribe and Ernest Legouvé.

SYNOPSIS:

Backstage at the Comédie Française, Adrianna, a celebrated dramatic actress, (based on the life of a real person) is rehearsing her lines, getting ready to go on stage. Several of her admirers compliment her profusely and she replies by diminishing her contributions to the art form, while expressing her feelings about the role of the performer.

ADRIANA

Ecco, respiro appena...  
Io son l’umile ancella  
del genio creator.  
Ei m’offre la favella  
Io la diffondo ai cor...  
Del verso io son l’accento,  
l’eco del dramma uman,  
il fragile strumento  
vassallo della man...  
Mite, gioconda, atroce,  
Mi chiamo Fedeltà.  
•Un soffio è la mia voce,•  
che al novo di morrà.

Listen; I’m scarcely breathing...  
I ‘m only the humble servant  
of some creative mind.  
He offers me the story;  
and I convey it to the heart...  
I’m but the verse’s music,  
the sound of mankind’s tale,  
the fragile means of playing,  
a handmaid of the art...  
Timid, amusing, am I, and hateful.  
They call me, “Faithful soul.”  
•My voice is just a whisper,• (repeat)  
that with the newborn day will die.

--From a *Young Artists Recital* program, sponsored by the Santa Cruz Opera Society, Inc. (SCOSI), ©2010