



AMERICAN OPERA CLASSICS



Paul  
**SALERNI**

**Tony Caruso's  
Final Broadcast**

**Opera in ten short  
scenes on a libretto  
by Dana Gioia**

**Eric Fennell, Tenor**

**Soloists**

**Monocacy  
Chamber Orchestra**

**Jung-Ho Pak**



Paul  
**SALERNI**  
(b. 1951)

**Tony Caruso's Final Broadcast (2004)**

**Opera in ten short scenes**  
**on a libretto by Dana Gioia (b. 1950)**

**Tony Caruso** ..... **Eric Fennell, Tenor**

**The Station Crew**

**Intern** ..... **Jacquelyn Familant, Soprano**

**Engineer** ..... **Jan Opalach, Bass-baritone**

**Announcer** ..... **Henry Fogel, Narrator**

**The Marketing Trio**

**Marketer 1** ..... **Vicki Doney, Soprano**

**Marketer 2** ..... **Val Hawk, Soprano**

**Marketer 3** ..... **Nancy Reed, Soprano**

**The Parochial School**

**Nun** ..... **Dísella Lârusdóttir, Soprano**

**Priest** ..... **Keith Phares, Baritone**

**Young Tony** ..... **Rory Lipkis, Boy soprano**

**The Three Visions**

**Tony's Mother** ..... **Alison Tupay, Mezzo-soprano**

**Maria Callas** ..... **Phoebe Fennell, Soprano**

**The Dark Woman** ..... **Patricia Risley, Mezzo-soprano**

**Monocacy Chamber Orchestra**

**Jung-Ho Pak**

1	Scene 1: The Studio ( <i>Intern, Engineer</i> )	2:21
2	Scene 2: The New Management ( <i>The Marketing Trio, Engineer, Announcer</i> )	2:41
3	Scene 3: The Second Caruso ( <i>Intern, Engineer, Tony Caruso, Announcer</i> )	5:13
4	Scene 4: Parochial School Flashback ( <i>Nun, Priest, Young Tony</i> )	2:54
5	Scene 5: Tony's Mother ( <i>Tony, Tony's Mother</i> )	5:26
6	Scene 6: The Past Is Over ( <i>The Marketing Trio, Tony</i> )	5:07
7	Scene 7: Maria Callas ( <i>Tony, Maria Callas</i> )	9:12
8	Scene 8: Eleven O'Clock ( <i>Intern, Engineer, Nun, Priest</i> )	2:45
9	Scene 9: Spiritual ( <i>Nun, Priest, Intern, Engineer, The Marketing Trio</i> )	4:30
10	Scene 10: The Final Duet ( <i>Announcer, Tony, The Dark Woman</i> )	12:15

## Synopsis

The opera takes place in a classical music radio station on the last night of its operations. (At midnight the station's new management will convert it to an easy-listening format.) The station's final program, *Opera Lover*, is hosted by Antonio Caruso, a failed tenor who has worked on the show for 27 years. The station intern and radio engineer try to comfort Tony for his impending loss. Meanwhile the new management celebrates its marketing plan aimed at the drive-time listener. During the final broadcast, Tony remembers his early dreams of artistic fame and success as the 'second Caruso.' In his desperate state, Tony is visited by three ghosts or visions — his dead mother, Maria Callas, and finally a mysterious woman.

## Paul Salerni (b. 1951)

### Tony Caruso's Final Broadcast

Every composer tries to combine personal strengths and aesthetic beliefs to create a unique sound world. This process becomes doubly challenging in collaborative productions such as ballet, film, or opera, for which the composer must accommodate artistic media beyond the music itself. The particular complexity of the collaboration between composer and librettist partly explains why so few new operas work equally well on both a musical and theatrical level. Today's eclectic art scene, fueled by individualism and experimentalism in a multicultural context, renders unlikely the odds of finding two people from different creative fields who share the same artistic values. In the case of *Tony Caruso's Final Broadcast*, these odds are happily overcome.

Paul Salerni's first encounter with Dana Gioia dates back to 1987, when Salerni's wife asked him to set to music a poem she had found in *The New Yorker* magazine. Little did Salerni know that this project would begin a creative partnership that would steer his career in the most unexpected directions over the next two decades. Since then, Salerni has set several of Gioia's poems in songs, song cycles, and choral pieces, while Gioia has constructed the narratives for the music that Salerni had composed based on two Italian fables. Through these collaborations, the composer and poet have developed an extraordinary symbiosis, each learning to manage the expression of his unique creativity to complement the other's artistry.

By 1994, Salerni was convinced that Salerni was the only composer capable of writing the music for a one-act opera that he had in mind. Although Salerni had never written an opera, Gioia realized that Salerni's compositional voice, which often incorporates diverse idioms and styles, would be a crucial advantage in this project. They had previously collaborated on two Italian narrative pieces, *The Old Witch and the New Moon* and *The Big Sword and the Little Broom*, which demonstrated Salerni's facility with the style and gestures of Italian opera. Songs such as *Money*

employed funk and jazz idioms. Salerni has also inherited much of his expressive vocal writing techniques and modern classical approaches, as used in the cycle *Speaking of Love*, from his late modernist mentor, Earl Kim.

Gioia's libretto takes full advantage of the composer's fluency in these mixed styles. In fact, each of the ten scenes in the opera demands a different musical flavor, ranging from commercial jingle, big band, and funk to Latin chant, *verismo*, *bel canto*, and gospel music. Though Salerni was comfortable composing in all of these styles, combining them to create a coherent scheme proved a challenge akin to preparing a ten-course meal in which every dish must represent a different type of cuisine featuring a single common ingredient.

Salerni uses a simple motive as one of the binding agents in the opera. While there are several types of motives (harmonic, melodic, intervallic, rhythmic, or a hybrid) throughout, the most evident figure appears in the instrumental part that accompanies the opening soprano melody, sung by the Intern. This series of ascending three-note figures will appear again and again; as a matter of fact, it recurs in each of the following scenes, but not always in the same manner. For instance, in the opening of the second scene, the motive appears in swing rhythm, while at the beginning of Scene 8, the motive's three notes are played simultaneously as a long sustained chord, paired with an inversion of the same motive on top.

Several other compositional techniques also serve to unify the story. One of the most remarkable examples is the inversion in Scene 9 of the traditional Latin hymn introduced as a flashback in Scene 4, a subtle touch, since the sonority and overall treatment of each melody are entirely different. The tune, *Tantum ergo*, initially appears in the key of F major, whereas its inversion in Scene 9 is written in G minor. This detail reflects the contrasting circumstances of the main character in the

past and present – the positive and promising boy soprano versus the failed tenor in despair during his final broadcast.

This scrupulous musical attention to the libretto's development of plot and character also creates a satisfying dramatic architecture. Listening to any of Salerni's works with words one notices his extraordinary skill in capturing human qualities, often playfully. (His paraphrases of several famous themes by Grieg, Mozart, and Bach in Scene 6 are not to be missed!) Gioia's libretto also allows the composer to explore dark and serious emotions such as in Tony's aria in Scene 3, which depicts the struggling character's resentment over the compromises that constitute his life. Salerni's beautiful evocation of emotions is perhaps partly due to his years of studying, coaching, and performing Earl Kim's music.

The practicality of Salerni's writing is also worth mentioning. From his choice of instrumentation to the size of the orchestra to the balance between the voices

and instruments, he is a master of theatrical detail as well as larger dramatic structures. As a conductor married to an opera director, Salerni understands the pit, the singers, and the stage. Dana Gioia's poetic libretto galvanized Salerni's decision to create a truly experimental opera. A decade of teamwork finally brought *Tony Caruso's Final Broadcast* to completion in 2004, when it was premiered unstaged at Lehigh University under the baton of Jung-Ho Pak. Slightly revised, it went on to win the National Opera Association Chamber Opera competition in 2007 and early the next year received its world premiere in Los Angeles. We shall eagerly await more operas by Paul Salerni and Dana Gioia.

### **Tae Sakamoto**

*Tae Sakamoto is a composer, pianist, and teacher. She is currently finishing her doctorate in composition at Stony Brook University, where she studies with Peter Winkler.*

## Paul Salerni



Composer Paul Salerni's music pulses "with life, witty musical ideas and instrumental color (*Philadelphia Inquirer*)" and has been described by *The New York Times* as "impressive" and "playful." Salerni's song cycles and chamber music have been widely performed in Europe, China, the United States, and Canada, and he has had orchestral commissions from the San Diego Chamber Orchestra, the New Haven Symphony, the Cape Cod Symphony, and the Lehigh Valley Chamber Orchestra, among others. Salerni is the NEH Distinguished Chair in the Humanities at Lehigh, a winner of Lehigh's highest acknowledgment of teaching excellence (the Stabler Prize), and the past Chair of the Suzuki Association of the Americas Board of Directors. An expert in the music of his teacher Earl Kim, he has presented Kim's music as a lecturer, conductor, and pianist at the Kennedy Center, the Aspen Festival, the Dall'Abaco Conservatory in Verona, Italy, the Great Mountains Music Festival, and in radio and television broadcasts in Korea. He is currently writing a second one-act opera on a libretto by Kate Light. That new opera is an adaptation of a *Dick Van Dyke TV Show* episode written and produced by Carl Reiner.

## Dana Gioia



Dana Gioia is a noted poet and critic. His collection of poems, *Interrogations at Noon*, won the 2001 American Book Award. His influential critical study, *Can Poetry Matter?*, was a finalist for the National Book Critics' Award. From 2003-2009, he served as the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. Gioia's poetry and prose have been widely translated, and his poetry has been set to music by over twenty composers. He has written the libretto for two operas. Gioia currently divides his time between California and Washington, D.C.

## Eric Fennell (Tony Caruso)



American lyric tenor Eric Fennell is a six season veteran of New York City Opera where he compiled thirteen different rôles, and has performed with other prestigious American companies, including San Francisco Opera, Seattle Opera, Dallas Opera, Arizona Opera, Austin Lyric Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, and the Spoleto Festival, as well as singing Rodolfo in Baz Luhrman's *La Bohème* on Broadway. Internationally, he has appeared with the Tokyo City Orchestra, Cairo Symphony, Macau International Opera Festival, Latvian National Symphony, and Deutsche Oper am Rhein.

## Jacquelyn Familant (Intern)



Soprano Jacquelyn Familant enjoys a career that spans the genres of opera, chamber music, and oratorio. She began her career as a principal artist with the Staatsoper Stuttgart in Germany and has performed with such distinguished organizations as the American Music Festival, Opera Company of Brooklyn, Modus Opera, Festival Lyrique-en-Mer, and the Chamber Music Society of Philadelphia.

## Jan Opalach (Engineer)



Jan Opalach has been a principal artist with New York City Opera for over 25 years, singing leading rôles in *Falstaff*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Il barbiere di Siviglia* among many others. He has appeared with the Metropolitan Opera, Seattle Opera, Washington Opera, Atlanta Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Opera Theater of St. Louis, Canadian, English National, and Netherlands Opera. He has recorded for Nonesuch, Argo, Bridge, CRI, Decca, Delos, EMI, L'Oiseau-Lyre, and Telarc. A winner of the W. M. Naumburg Vocal Competition and the Metropolitan Opera National Auditions and recipient of a recital grant from the National Endowment of the Arts, he is currently on the voice faculty of the Eastman School of Music.

## Henry Fogel (Announcer)

Henry Fogel is currently Dean of the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. He has had a 45-year career in music administration, including President and CEO of the League of American Orchestras from 2003 to 2008 and President of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra from 1985-2003. He has also been Executive Director of the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington, D.C., and Orchestra Manager of the New York Philharmonic. From 1963 to 1978 he was program director and vice president of WONO, a commercial classical music radio station in Syracuse, New York.

## 3Spirit (The Marketing Trio)



3Spirit is a musical collaborative brought together as the “Bobettes” by Jazzman Bob Dorough. They opened this year’s Sunday lineup at the 32nd annual COTA Jazz Festival with their repertoire of originals, jazz standards and popular song.

**Vicki Doney** can be heard as the female vocal lead on the 2009 release *The Children’s Suite*, a staged orchestral piece written and arranged by jazz legend alto saxophonist Phil Woods. Her TV and movie credits include *Ally McBeal*, *The New Charlie’s Angels*, and the latest 2009 *School House Rock*. In 1986 as a member of the LA Jazz Choir, she was a featured soloist on the GRAMMY® nominated album *From All Sides*.



**Val Hawk** appeared as Becky Sue in *Schoolhouse Rock*'s 1994 series, *Money Rock*. As a member of the jazz vocal group The Ritz, she sang, played guitar, and contributed arrangements for *Almost Blue* (Denon). She has appeared internationally at festivals and concerts and at the Fukuoka, Tokyo and Jakarta Blue Note jazz clubs.

**Nancy Reed** has performed world wide as a singer and bassist with such notables as Phil Woods, David "Fathead" Neuman, and Houston Person. She is currently the featured vocalist of the Ellington Legacy Band, with whom she has recently recorded. Nancy has also recorded with Spencer Reed, David Liebman, John Coates, and David Leonhardt.

### **Dísella Lärusdóttir (Nun)**



Soprano Dísella Lärusdóttir was a National Finalist in the Metropolitan National Council Auditions and the winner of the Vocal Division of the Philadelphia Orchestra's Albert M. Greenfield Competition. A native of Iceland, she has appeared as a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Christoph Eschenbach, the Symphony Orchestra of Iceland, and as Adina in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* with the Iceland National Opera.

### **Keith Phares (Priest)**



Acclaimed both on the opera and concert stage as one of today's most versatile artists, baritone Keith Phares has appeared at the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera, New York City Opera, Washington National Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Santa Fe Opera, and Glimmerglass Opera, and sung with the New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, and Los Angeles Philharmonic. Noted not only for his performances of the operas of Britten, Donizetti, Mozart and Rossini, he has earned great praise for his performances of 20th and 21st century opera, including works by Jake Heggie, Dominick Argento, John Adams, Rachel Portman, and Robert Aldridge.

## Rory Lipkis (Young Tony)

Rory Lipkis is currently a 7th grade student at Moravian Academy in Bethlehem, PA. He studies piano and organ and is an active composer. His orchestral piece *Clown Dance* was performed in 2008 by the Allentown Symphony Orchestra, and his choral works, *Gloria, I Heard a Bird Sing*, and *Spring*, have also recently been performed in public.

## Alison Tupay (Tony's Mother)



Mezzo-soprano Alison Tupay's operatic credits include *Der Trommler (Der Kaiser von Atlantis)*, *Sesto (La clemenza di Tito)*, *Jocasta (Oedipus Rex)*, *Rosina (Il barbiere di Siviglia)*, and *Pitti-Sing (The Mikado)*. Her orchestral credits include Mahler's *Symphonies Nos. 2 and 3*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Mozart's *Requiem*, and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*. She is a graduate of Boston University and The Juilliard School.

## Phoebe Fennell (Maria Callas)



Soprano Phoebe Fennell has performed extensively in North America and Europe, at present making her home in Germany. She lists New York City Opera, Lake George Opera Festival (NY), Oregon Lyric Opera, and Banff Center for the Arts (Canada) as some of the many opera companies with which she has sung. Her many awards for singing contemporary music include First Place in the National Opera Association Chamber Competition, First Prize in the North American Contemporary Artist Competition, and First Place in the Chelsea New York New Music Festival.

## Patricia Risley (The Dark Woman)



*Opera News* hails Patricia Risley for “her voice... luscious and agile, her characterization both boisterous and tender” as well as her beautiful “singing with ease and certainty”. Frequently sought after on national and international stages, she has sung with the Metropolitan Opera, Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin, Madrid’s Teatro Real, Munich’s Bayerische Staatsoper, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Opera Colorado, Arizona Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Minnesota Opera, Opera Pacific, Los Angeles Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Innsbruck Festival, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Utah Opera, Fort Worth Opera, and the Spoleto Festival, USA.

## Monocacy Chamber Orchestra

The Monocacy Chamber Orchestra was founded in 2007 by Paul Salerni. The orchestra combines emerging and experienced musicians from the Lehigh Valley in order to give lively concerts that include accepted and new masterpieces for chamber orchestra. Soloists for the concerts are chosen from members of the orchestra. In its three seasons, the Monocacy has given seven concerts under the baton of Artistic Director Paul Salerni, Principal Guest Conductor Donald Spieth, and Guest Conductor Eugene Albuescu. With Donald Spieth and Guest Conductor Jung-Ho Pak at the helm, it also served as the orchestra for *Operas on Operas*, a presentation of two-one act operas that featured Salerni’s *Tony Caruso’s Final Broadcast*. Under Donald Spieth’s direction, it was the featured orchestra on a CD of Salerni’s compositions and arrangements entitled *Dances and Fables*.

**Violin:** Timothy Schwarz (concertmaster), Genia Maslov, Domenic Salerni, Linda Fiore;

**Viola:** Adriana Linares, Ayane Kosaza; **Cello:** David Moulton, Josue Gonzalez;

**Contrabass and Electric Bass:** Dominick Fiore; **Flute:** Linda Ganus; **Oboe/Baritone Sax:** David Diggs;

**Clarinet:** Deborah Andrus; **Alto Sax:** Emily Sipes; **Tenor Sax/Bass Clarinet:** Steve Reisteter;

**Trumpet:** Lawrence Wright, Kenny Bean; **Tenor Trombone:** Jarred Antonacci; **Bass Trombone:** Paul Arbogast;

**Keyboards:** Paul Salerni; **Acoustic and Electric Guitar:** Vic Juris;

**Percussion:** Miles Salerni; **Trap Set:** Gary Rismiller

## Jung-Ho Pak



Jung-Ho Pak is currently Artistic Director and Conductor of Orchestra Nova San Diego, and the Cape Cod Symphony Orchestra, as well as Director of Orchestras and Music Director of the World Youth Symphony Orchestra at the Interlochen Center for the Arts. He is also Music Director Emeritus of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra, and former Music Director of the San Diego Symphony Orchestra.

# TONY CARUSO'S FINAL BROADCAST

A One-Act Opera in Ten Short Scenes

Music by Paul Salerni • Libretto by Dana Gioia

*Setting:* The opera takes place in the studio of a classical music radio station.

## ① SCENE ONE

*Radio Studio: Half an hour before the show. The Station Intern and Broadcast Engineer enter.*

**INTERN**

I can't believe they're shutting down the station.

**ENGINEER**

Believe it, kid. The station's sold—lock, stock, and broadcast frequency.

**INTERN**

How did it happen? The station made money.

**ENGINEER**

Not enough to survive. Some animals are worth more dead.

**INTERN**

This is my first job, and I've lost it after just two weeks!

**ENGINEER**

I've been here ten years. I get fired tonight and rehired on Monday—

with a pay cut. The bastards!

**INTERN**

What about Tony?

**ENGINEER**

He's gone. He's dead. The new management hates him.

**INTERN**

How long has he been here?

**ENGINEER**

Since Adam and Eve. Maybe before.

**INTERN**

Quit joking! Tony's a nice guy.

**ENGINEER**

I dunno. Tony has been here forever. He gave Mozart his first airplay.

**INTERN**

How can they cancel his show? *Opera Lover* is a classic.

**ENGINEER**

A classic is what they call a show the day before they cancel it. Making a classic is long hard work. Killing one is easy.

## ② SCENE TWO

*The side of the stage is illuminated to reveal the Marketing Trio, which is composed of three women dressed in male business suits—the Account Executive, Program Director, and Marketing Research Director. They sing into a large old-style radio microphone bearing the acronym WE Z Y and perform in the manner of a swing-era girls vocal trio.*

**ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE**

Easy!

**PROGRAM DIRECTOR** (*harmonizing*)

Easy!

**MARKETING RESEARCH DIRECTOR** (*harmonizing*)

Easy!

**TRIO**

Easy listening!

W - E - Z - Y!

**ANNOUNCER** (*speaking*)

W - E - Z - Y is proud to announce that tonight at midnight, the station begins a new format—Soft Rock . . .

**ACCOUNT & RESEARCH**

Ahh!

**ANNOUNCER** (*spoken*)

. . . Easy Listening

**ACCOUNT & RESEARCH**

O h h!

**ANNOUNCER** (*spoken*)

A sound so smooth, it soothes.

**ACCOUNT & RESEARCH**

O o h!

**TRIO**

W - E - Z - Y!

The station that relaxes —

So smooth it soothes.

**RESEARCH**

I'm the brains.

**PROGRAM**

I'm the money.

**ACCOUNT**

I'm the suit.

**PROGRAM / ACCOUNT**

*They point to the Marketing Research Director*  
He's so smart!

**RESEARCH / ACCOUNT**

*They point to the Program Director*  
He's so macho!

**PROGRAM / RESEARCH**

*They point to the Account Executive*  
He's so cute!

**TRIO**

What a night!  
Everything's working  
Without a hitch.

We can't stop  
We can't lose.

**PROGRAM**

I'll get rich.

**MARKETING SONG****TRIO**

Fill your drive-time on the freeways  
With soothing tunes and world-class DJs,  
Super oldies ten in a row.  
Win a coffee mug on the call-in show.  
Our mega-wattage fills the air  
To maximize our market share.  
We're bigger, stronger, leaner, taller.  
The best ad value for your dollar.

**ACCOUNT (aside)**

(And a free T-shirt for our next caller.)

**TRIO**

So just stay tuned to 90.7  
And you'll discover drive-time heaven.

**③ SCENE THREE**

*Center stage Radio Studio: Tony Caruso enters the studio. He wears a dressy suit, but is disheveled. He seems slightly drunk. He staggers over to the Engineer and stands there silently.*

**ENGINEER**

You look like hell.

**CARUSO**

I feel like hell.

**INTERN**

I'm so sorry, Tony.

**ENGINEER**

Rotten luck, Tony. But no time to talk now. We have a show to do. We're running late. It's almost nine o'clock. Let's get set up.

**CARUSO (to the Intern)**

Welcome to the last act, kid. The grand finale. Twenty-seven years doing this show. When I started, I was a singer. "The Second Caruso," my friends called me. This show was just a sideline. But my opera career never took off. This show is my opera career—I mean *was*—and I love it. Being here with this music was as wonderful as singing at the Met or La Scala.

**ENGINEER**

Two minutes!

**CARUSO**

... This music has meant more to me than anything else in my life. When the show is on, I'm alive, utterly alive!

**ARIA**

I never chose this show.

This show chose me.

I never chose this life.

It happened to me.

I longed to be a star.

I wanted fame.

I wanted one great love.

It never came.

I sat in this studio

Year after year.

Repeat the same mistake, kid.

It's called a career.

Now I'm invisible,

A voice in the air.

Turn off the radio,

And nobody's there.

*Tony settles in at the console. The Intern stands at a side microphone.*

**ENGINEER**

Thirty seconds . . .

**ANNOUNCER (spoken)**

W - E - Z - Y is proud to present Antonio Caruso's award-winning *Opera Lover*. Now sit back until midnight and enjoy three hours of immortal music and great voices hosted by celebrated singer and commentator Antonio Caruso in what we regret to say will be his final broadcast. And now our star announcer, Antonio Caruso.

**④ SCENE FOUR**

*Stage left: A Nun is presenting a Choirboy to a Priest. She beams with pride in the child.*

**NUN**

Here is our little star, Father— Tony Caruso. He is in fifth grade.

**PRIEST**

Caruso. That's a lucky name for a singer.

**YOUNG TONY**

Yes, father.

**NUN**

He has the voice of an angel.

**PRIEST**

I have to agree, sister,

The voice of an angel,

Though he is a devil everywhere else.

**NUN**

Sing something for us, Tony. Something you love.

**YOUNG TONY**

*Tantum ergo Sacramentum.*

*Veneremur cernui:*

*Et antiquum documentum,*

*Novo cedat ritui:*

*Praestet fides supplementum*

*Sensuum defectui.*

**NUN**

He'll be famous. A second Caruso.

**NUN & PRIEST**

A second Caruso.

**YOUNG TONY**

*(with nun & priest harmonizing)*

*Genitori, Genitoque*

*Laus et jubilatio:*

*Salus, honor, virtus quoque,*

*Sit et benedictio:*

*Procedenti ab utroque*

*Compar sit laudatio.*

**ALL THREE**

Amen.

*Fade into next Scene*

**5 SCENE FIVE**

*Studio: the room is now dark except for the light on Caruso alone at the microphone. He sits there quietly while a selection plays for broadcast. The Engineer and Intern sit behind the dimly lit glass wall of the sound booth.*

**WOMAN'S VOICE (offstage)**

Tonio?

**CARUSO**

Who's that? Quiet! We're broadcasting.

**WOMAN'S VOICE (nearer)**

Tonio? *Dove sei?*

**CARUSO**

*(slowly standing as he removes his microphone)*

Mama?

*A woman dressed in black emerges from the shadows.*

What are you doing here?

How can you be here? You're dead.

**MOTHER**

Tonio, *perché si triste?*

Why you so sad?

**CARUSO**

*Mama? Why are you here?*

*Perché sei tornata?*

**MOTHER**

I came to help you remember.

*Devi ricordare.*

**CARUSO**

Remember what?

**MOTHER**

*Canta per me. Canta qualcosa bella per me.*

**CARUSO**

Mom, I don't sing anymore.

**MOTHER**

*Devi ricordare. Canta per me.*

**CARUSO**

Please, Mama.

**MOTHER**

You had a gift from God.

You had the power to sing.

We had so little then,

But I was never sad

Because you were blessed

*Con un dono divino?*

Where did it go?

**CARUSO**

I never got my break

I never had the chance.

**MOTHER**

Where did the song go?

*Figlio mio, mi dici.*

*Dov'è andato il canto?*

**CARUSO**

*Non dici così, Mama.*

I never lost the gift.

**MOTHER**

*Perché non canti mai?*

*Dov'è andato il canto?*

You had a gift from God.

Where did it go?

*She hears a clock strike the hour.*

**ANNOUNCER**

And that concludes the first hour of . . .

*(voice fades)*

**MOTHER**

Tony, it's late. I've got to go.

**CARUSO**

Don't leave. We need to talk. I've missed you. . .

**MOTHER**

No, Tony. *Devo andare adesso. Devo andare via.*

*She starts to leave.*

**CARUSO**

No, stay, stay. *Rimani, Mama, rimani!*

*She slowly disappears.*

*(softly)* Mama!

**6 SCENE SIX**

*The Marketing Trio stands before a tall radio studio cabinet full of classical LPs and CDs. The Account Executive pulls out an LP with astonishment.*

**ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE**

O momma!

Take a peak

At this antique.

*She hands it to the Marketing Research Director who looks at it in disgust. During this next section, the Account Executive pulls out one album at a time—pronouncing the name of the composer—and then hands it to the Marketing Research Director who tosses it away into a huge plastic trash barrel. They enjoy the game more with each exchange.*

**ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE / MARKETING RESEARCH**

Ravel? Won't Sell. Bizet? No way. Sibelius? Get serious.

Britten? You're kiddin'. Franck? He stank! Liszt? Not missed!

Bach? A crock! Gluck? The snook! Mozart? An old fart!

Puccini? A weenie! Tchaikovsky? He's out-skie!

*They now begin joyously dumping LPs and CDs by the armful.*

**TRIO**

The past is over.

Let's clean house.

Out with Verdi.

Goodbye Strauss.

Trade in Wagner

For smooth soft rock.

The future starts

At twelve o'clock.

Classical music's

Gotta go.

All the surveys

Tell us so.

Brahms is boring.

Bach is dreary.

Morning drive-time

Should be cheery.

Grieg is stale.

Mozart mouldy.

Give us this day

Our golden oldie.

Tschaikovsky's pathetic.

Schubert's a nerd.

And once is too much

For Beethoven's third.

Curtains for opera.

Unstring that cello.

Make the music

Soft and mellow.

Whether you're driving

Or trying to score,

Lean back, relax

While our ratings soar.

Mile after mile

Commute with a smile.

So bye-bye Beethoven,

And don't touch that dial!

**7 SCENE SEVEN**

*Center stage: Tony is sitting at the microphone when the back door opens flooding the room with a dramatic shaft of light silhouetting a beautiful woman. She enters slowly to music that announces her importance. She does not speak, but her demeanor reveals her command of the situation.*

**CARUSO**

Who are you?

*The woman does not respond.*

**CARUSO**

Who are you?

**CALLAS**

Oh, don't be tiresome. You know who I am.

You summoned me.

**CARUSO**

I didn't summon anyone.

**CALLAS**

Why bother to deny the obvious?

You've wanted me. You've dreamed of me for years.

*He pauses for a moment—staring at her.*

**CARUSO**

Maria Callas? But you're dead.

**CALLAS**

And you are rude! I hoped I would receive  
A better welcome from my leading man.

**CARUSO**

Callas? How can it be? Callas?

**CALLAS**

Hopeless! Is this the entrance I deserve?  
*She slowly gestures to him in the grand style.*  
This stuttering, imbecilic . . . amateur!

**CARUSO**

I'm sorry. I am . . .

**CALLAS**

You're always sorry. That is your greatest talent.

**CARUSO**

I always tried to learn from you.

**CALLAS**

You tried, perhaps, but you failed.

**CARUSO**

Why did I fail? I worked. I studied.  
I loved my art.

**CALLAS**

You wanted love without its pain.

**CARUSO**

Why have you come here?

**CALLAS**

No, tell me first why you have dreamed of me.

**CARUSO**

I always wished I could have sung with you.

**CALLAS**

A common wish. And do you think that I  
Have come tonight to grant it?

**CARUSO**

I don't know.

**CALLAS**

Listen!

**ARIA**

*I. Cavatina*

I have not come for you.

I come here to perform.

To show you what you might have been.

I'm nothing but the role I play—

Nothing and everything.

They claim that my career was short.

You know it was the longest ever.

No other singer burned as hot,

As brightly, or as long as I—

Nothing and everything.

You understand what critics don't.

They call us stars because we burn  
In darkness—cold, remote, and bright,  
Unreachable, unaging—  
Nothing and everything!

*II. Cabaletta*

To be divine

A woman must die,

Offer her flesh

To satisfy

A freezing fire,

Fed and sustained

By pure desire,

That burns so bright

It fills the sky.

To be divine

A woman must die,

Seeking the pain

To magnify

A sacrifice

That makes her seem

Both fire and ice,

A star to pierce

The darkest sky.

**CALLAS**

Your time has come.

Now sing with me.

Burn me. Dazzle me.

**CARUSO**

Give me a moment.

I'm not ready yet.

I haven't prepared.

**CALLAS**

You've had a lifetime to prepare.

What is our art but practice,

An endless preparation,

The way a girl will spend long years

Trying to grow more beautiful

For lovers she does not yet know?

**CARUSO**

Give me a moment.

**CALLAS**

I've given you too much already.

**CARUSO**

Just a moment . . .

**CALLAS**

Too late.

**CARUSO**

Let me try . . .



**CALLAS**

A singer who misses his entrance  
must be left behind.

**CARUSO**

Please let me try . . .

**CALLAS**

Find someone else to sing with you.

*She turns to go.*

**CARUSO**

Wait. I'll try. Let me try . . .

**CALLAS**

You try. Others give their lives.

Goodbye.

*She leaves. The stage darkens except for a narrow spotlight on Tony. Then spotlight fades to darkness.*

**8 SCENE EIGHT**

*Radio station: stage center. The soundbooth lights up.*

**INTERN**

What a great show. People keep calling to say how much they're going to miss Tony. One woman was even crying.

**ENGINEER**

We're the ones who should be crying!

Tony sounds great tonight, but he looks like hell.

**INTERN**

He does look bad, and he's still got almost an hour to go.

Maybe we should end early.

**ENGINEER**

No way. Tony would rather die than end early.

*Center stage darkens but not all the way to black. The Intern and the Engineer freeze in silhouette.*

**9 SCENE NINE**

*Stage left: lights up to reveal the Priest and the Nun, both visibly aged. The Priest, who is now blind, sits in a wheelchair.*

**PRIEST**

How nice to talk about old times, sister.

Most of what I do now is remember. By the way, whatever happened to little Tony Caruso?

What a voice that boy had.

**NUN**

He never did much with it.

He's a radio announcer somewhere.

**PRIEST**

What a shame to fail at something you love.

**NUN**

He never tried hard enough. He was a dreamer.

**PRIEST**

Still, it must hurt to waste a gift like that.

**NUN**

Getting through any life hurts.

The only thing to do with pain is offer it up to God.

**PRIEST**

Yes, offer it up.

*He starts to hum a tune.*

Do you remember that old hymn, sister?

*He hums a little more.*

**NUN**

Is this the one?

**SPIRITUAL****NUN**

Help us bear this load of sorrow.

Help us through this night of fear.

God, protect us till tomorrow,

As we walk this path of tears.

**PRIEST**

Help me bear this load of sickness

Where the darkness never clears.

**NUN & PRIEST**

God, protect us till tomorrow,

As we walk this path of tears.

*Center stage: lights up an Engineer*

**ENGINEER**

Help me bear this load of anger,

Which grows heavier with the years.

**ALL THREE**

God, protect us till tomorrow,

As we walk this path of tears.

*Spotlight on Intern*

**INTERN**

Help me bear this load of worry.

Help my loneliness and fears.

**ALL FOUR**

God, protect us till tomorrow,

As we walk this path of tears.

*Stage right: lights up on Marketing Trio. They sing as one.*

**MARKETING TRIO**

Help us bear this load of envy.

Lead us when no guide appears.

**ALL SEVEN**

God, protect us till tomorrow,

As we walk this path of tears.

**ALL**

Jesus walked the road before us.

Jesus felt these trials and fears.

Jesus, please be there to guide us,  
As we walk this path of tears.  
[Dark]

## 10 SCENE TEN

*Center stage Radio Studio: the studio is dark except for a spotlight on Tony who sits at the announcer's console sorting through disks and records in a state of agitation.*

**ANNOUNCER** (Spoken offstage)

As we near the end of our last broadcast day, W-E-Z-Y wishes to thank our listeners for their years of loyal support. The time is 11:45 P.M. Now we reinjoin Antonio Caruso for the final segment of *Opera Lover*.

**CARUSO**

There's only time for one more number.

So many possibilities . . .

Which one to choose?

A love scene? A mad scene?

A death scene? Which one? Which one?

*As he shuffles through his recordings, the door at the back of the studio opens revealing a dark woman silhouetted against the frame of the door. She slowly approaches Tony without him noticing. Silently she puts her hand on his shoulder. He looks up startled.*

**CARUSO**

Who . . . ? (softly)

*The woman gently signals him to be silent.*

**WOMAN**

It's time to end.

I've come to help you end.

**CARUSO**

But who are you?

**WOMAN**

I am the one you've waited for.

**CARUSO**

You remind me of someone.

**WOMAN**

Every woman that you've ever loved

In silence or despair,

Every song you've never sung.

I am the one you've waited for,

And now it's time to choose your ending.

**CARUSO**

What song should I choose?

**WOMAN**

What do you want to find?

**CARUSO**

Everything I've ever lost.

**WOMAN**

Nothing ever lost returns.

**CARUSO**

Then what is left?

**WOMAN**

Everything else.

Everything you lacked

The courage to possess.

**CARUSO**

Who are you?

**WOMAN**

Haven't you guessed by now?

**CARUSO**

I am afraid to guess.

**WOMAN**

You are afraid too much,

But now it isn't you

Who makes the choices.

You only get to choose

How we should end.

I'll ask again.

How do you wish to end?

**CARUSO** (in a whisper)

With passion.

**WOMAN**

What?

**CARUSO**

Passion!

The passion that I've always felt,

But never had the chance to live.

**DUET**

**WOMAN**

Now is the moment,

As midnight arrives,

When time will unravel

Our separate lives.

The music must stop.

The lights must go black.

Where will you go

When there's no turning back?

**CARUSO**

Now is the moment,

As midnight arrives,

When payment is due

On the loan of our lives.

Will I be heard

Or will I stand dumb?

After the music  
Only silence will come.

**WOMAN**

Do you remember what you've lost?

**CARUSO**

Every moment of every night.

**WOMAN**

Do you remember whom you've lost?

**CARUSO**

Every detail etched by old desire.

**WOMAN**

Remember . . .

**ARIA**

**CARUSO**

Memories of love are midnight's poison,

The slow venom that will not kill,

The drink that renders thirst unending,

Drawn from the rivers of hell.

Memories of loss are midnight's passion,

The cross it carries to the bone-covered hill,

The pain that offers no redemption,

But the slow descent to hell.

Memories of love are midnight's prison.

The heart's dark inescapable cell.

Tear off the lock, pull down the walls,

You still remain in hell.

**WOMAN**

If that is memory,

Give up the past.

If that is life,

Leave it behind.

And choose another way—

With me.

*DUET*

**WOMAN**

Now leave your fears and your sorrows behind.

Midnight approaches, and I am here.

What you desire have the courage to find.

The end of your pain is near.

Now let your voice and mine combine.

Ours is the song you ache to sing.

You are the song, and the song is mine—

The music you were made to sing.

**CARUSO**

Now leave my fears and my sorrows behind.

Midnight approaches, and you are here.

What I desire I'll have courage to find.

The end of my pain is here.

Let my voice and yours combine.

Ours is the song I ache to sing.

You are the song, and your song is mine—

The music I was made to sing.

**WOMAN**

Do you take me as your lover?

**CARUSO**

Yes.

**WOMAN**

Forever?

**CARUSO**

Yes, forever.

**TOGETHER**

*As they sing the duet, the stage darkens except for a spotlight on the lovers.*

*DUET FINALE*

**WOMAN & CARUSO**

Only us and only now.

Beyond the dark, beyond desire—

The song we make together.

Love requires only one

Reciprocate its melody,

Two dreamers locked in unison.

Only us and only now,

Nothing else that we desire

Beyond the song we make together.

Love and darkness now are one.

Sleep in my arms and you will find

Ecstasy in oblivion.

Only us and only now

Lost in the sleep we both desire

In the night we share together—

This night we sing together.

*They exit together through a lighted door.*

Phoebe Fennell as Maria Callas and Eric Fennell as Tony Caruso



Jan Opalach as the Engineer



Keith Phares as the Priest



Photos:  
Allen Kingsbury



AMERICAN OPERA CLASSICS

Paul Salerni's award-winning opera with a libretto by Dana Gioia takes place in a classical music radio station on the last night of its operations. Its last program, 'Opera Lover', is hosted by Antonio Caruso, who remembers his early dreams of artistic fame as the 'second Caruso' and is visited by three ghosts — his dead mother, Maria Callas, and a mysterious woman. Praised for his 'resplendent vocalism' (*American Record Guide*) and his 'lusciously sweet voice, with its ringing, perfectly-tuned high notes' (*Opera Now*), the young tenor Eric Fennell sings the title role.

**www.naxos.com**



**Paul SALEARNI**  
(b. 1951)

**Tony Caruso's Final Broadcast (2004)**

Opera in ten short scenes  
on a libretto by Dana Gioia (b. 1950)

- Tony Caruso** ..... Eric Fennell, Tenor
- Intern** ..... Jacquelyn Familant, Soprano
- Engineer** ..... Jan Opalach, Bass-baritone
- Announcer** ..... Henry Fogel, Narrator
- Marketer 1** ..... Vicki Doney, Soprano
- Marketer 2** ..... Val Hawk, Soprano
- Marketer 3** ..... Nancy Reed, Soprano
- Nun** ..... Disella Làrusdóttir, Soprano
- Priest** ..... Keith Phares, Baritone
- Young Tony** ..... Rory Lipkis, Boy soprano
- Tony's Mother** .... Alison Tupay, Mezzo-soprano
- Maria Callas** ..... Phoebe Fennell, Soprano
- The Dark Woman** .. Patricia Risley, Mezzo-soprano

**Monocacy Chamber Orchestra**  
**Jung-Ho Pak**

A full track list can be found on page 3 of the booklet.  
The libretto can be found in the booklet, and may also be accessed at [www.naxos.com/libretti/669031.htm](http://www.naxos.com/libretti/669031.htm)  
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