

PENTATONE

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The Canterville Ghost

GORDON GETTY

OPER LEIPZIG

GEWANDHAUS-
ORCHESTER

MATTHIAS FOREMNY

World Premiere
Opera



PENTATONE

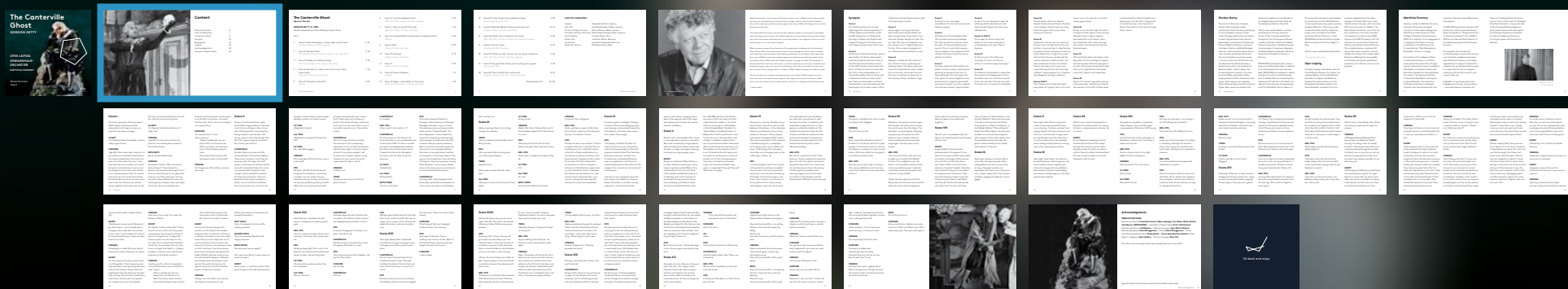
AMERICAN OPERAS





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The Canterville Ghost

Opera in One Act

GORDON GETTY (b. 1933)

Libretto adapted from Oscar Wilde by Gordon Getty

ACT I

- 1
- Scene 1: Great Grandpapa, is there really a ghost here?
(1st Boy, Chesire, 2nd Boy, Virginia)
5. 30

2

Scene 2: My dear Otises
(Canterville, 1st Twin, 2nd Twin, Virginia, Otis, Mrs. Otis)

5. 10

3

Scene 3: Daddy, hurry! Bring the key!
(1st Twin, 2nd Twin, Otis, Virginia, Mrs. Otis)

2. 18

4

Scene 4: My dear sir, I really must insist on your oiling those chains
(Otis, Ghost, 1st Twin, 2nd Twin)

1. 16

5

Scene 5: Rising Sun Lubricator!
(Ghost)

3. 00

4 Track Information

- 6
- Scene 6: I confess disappointment
(Otis, Mrs. Otis, 1st Twin, 2nd Twin, Virginia)
2. 54

7

Scene 7: I fear you are far from well
(Mrs. Otis, Ghost, 1st Twin, 2nd Twin)

1. 36

8

Scene 8: Insupportable! To be lectured on professionalism!
(Ghost)

3. 50

9

Scene 9: Boo!
(Ghost, 1st Twin, 2nd Twin)

0. 33

10

Scene 10: Unclean!
(Ghost, 1st Twin, 2nd Twin)

0. 31

11

Scene 11
(Ghost, 1st Twin, 2nd Twin)

0. 35

12

Scene 12: Fiasco! Disgrace!
(Ghost)

1. 17

13

Scene 13: Again no bloodstain on the armor
(Otis, Mrs. Otis, Virginia, 1st Twin, 2nd Twin)

1. 49

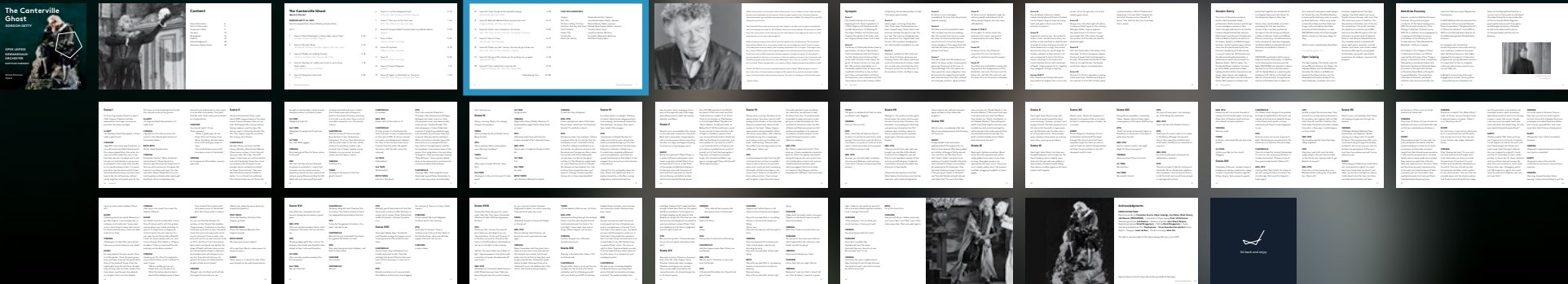


14	Scene 14: I hear the ghost has packed his bags (<i>Canterville, Mrs. Otis, Otis</i>)	2. 38
15	Scene 15: Barbara! Barbara! Does anyone hear me? (<i>Virginia, Ghost, 1st Voice, 2nd Voice</i>)	13. 27
16	Scene 16: Hiram, she is nowhere in the house (<i>Mrs. Otis, Otis, 1st Twin, 2nd Twin, Canterville, Cheshire</i>)	0. 54
17	Scene 17: She isn't here (<i>Canterville, Otis, Cheshire</i>)	0. 43
18	Scene 18: Thank you, Mrs. Umney. You may all go to bed now (<i>Otis, Mrs. Otis, 1st Twin, 2nd Twin, Virginia</i>)	2. 45
19	Scene 19: My good Otis, thank you for putting me up again (<i>Canterville, Otis</i>)	2. 28
20	Scene 20: Then shall all the house be still (<i>Virginia, Cheshire, Mrs. Otis, Otis, Canterville</i>)	8. 43

Total playing time: 62. 08

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Virginia	Alexandra Hutton, Soprano
Mrs. Otis	Jean Broekhuizen, Mezzo-soprano
1st Twin, 1st Boy, 1st Voice	Denise Wernly, Mezzo-soprano
2nd Twin, 2nd boy, 2nd Voice	Rachel Marie Hauge, Mezzo-soprano
Cecil Cheshire	Timothy Oliver, Tenor
Hiram Otis	Jonathan Michie, Baritone
Canterville	Anooshah Golesorkhi, Baritone
Ghost (Sir Simon)	Matthew Treviño, Bass





8 Composer's Note

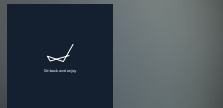
Wilde's finest poetry is in his prose, and his finest prose is in his children's stories. Most are dark. Sacrifice and heartbreak are the themes. Frank homage is paid to Hans Christian Andersen, whose little match girl and little mermaid repeat their roles in Wilde's *The Happy Prince* and *The Fisherman and His Soul*.

The Canterville Ghost looks at the sunnier side. Virginia's sacrifice, and the ghost's heartbreak, reach the endings we hoped for. All of Wilde's ideas but one are inspired. He was never in better form. Not many writers could have sent up the stolid Otises or the indignant Sir Simon so richly while leaving us in on their side throughout.

While my previous opera *Usher House* turns Poe upside down, the libretto for *The Canterville Ghost* follows Wilde's short story pretty closely. His one misjudgment was Sir Simon's murder of his wife three centuries before, and his breezy justification of it to Virginia. That might have fit in many of Wilde's works. Here it grates against the wholesome and family-friendly theme. The libretto, like the 1944 movie with Charles Laughton, changes this detail. The bloodstain is also relocated from the floor to the armor, so that the audience can see it. Also Canterville and Cheshire are given more continuous roles, Washington Otis is left out, and Mrs. Umney is seen but not heard. These changes reflect no critique of Wilde. Stage and page have different needs.

The dos and don'ts of romantic comedy are pretty much eternal. Wilde has given us one, in short story form, of unique beauty and genius. We laugh and cry, and are enriched. I added music, and some words, with the same intention. The trick is in bringing it off. Comedy is hard.

— Gordon Getty



Synopsis

Scene 1

The Cheshire family at its annual pilgrimage to Sir Simon's gravesite. It is 1960. Virginia and Cheshire are 85 and 88. Generations of offspring fill the stage. Children ask Cheshire and Virginia if the ghost of Sir Simon was real. Virginia assures them that it was.

Scene 2

The library at Canterville Chase, seventy years before. Sir Simon's descendant Lord Canterville has sold the Chase to the Otis family and introduces them to the staff. He warns them about the ghost. Sir Simon's armor is at one side. Mrs. Otis notices a bloodstain on it. Canterville explains that Sir Simon had murdered his brother-in-law on that spot three centuries before, and that the bloodstain cannot be removed. Otis tries anyhow. He scrubs it away. A flash

of lightning. Canterville promises to help if the ghost gives trouble.

Scene 3

Library again, morning, three days later. Three times the bloodstain has been cleaned away. Three times it has returned. Perhaps the ghost is real. The pre-teen Otis twins are delighted and plan pranks on him. Virginia feels sorry for him. Otis considers charging him rent. All proceed to breakfast as usual.

Scene 4

Midnight, outside the Otis' bedroom door. Enter Sir Simon, groaning and clanking chains. Otis opens, gives him some oil to lubricate his chains, chides him on manners, and closes the door. The twins jump from another door to throw pillows at him. He flees in rage.

Scene 5

Sir Simon's room. Outraged, scandalized, fit to be tied. He promises hideous revenge.

Scene 6

All Otises are at the breakfast table. Otis considers eviction proceedings. Mrs. Otis worries that eviction would be unfair. Sir Simon's performances are art of a sort, and artists deserve some indulgence. They agree that Otis will take the chains away if Sir Simon refuses to oil them.

Scene 7

The hall outside the Otis' bedroom as before. Sir Simon enters, moaning and groaning. He pauses at the door. A maniacal laugh. Mrs. Otis opens this time, gives him some indigestion tonic, lectures him for neglecting his health, and closes the door. The twins ambush him with pea-shooters. Again he flees.

Scene 8

Sir Simon's room. Apoplectic rage. He will bring death and madness to all Otises except Virginia, who has never offended him.

Scenes 9, 10 & 11

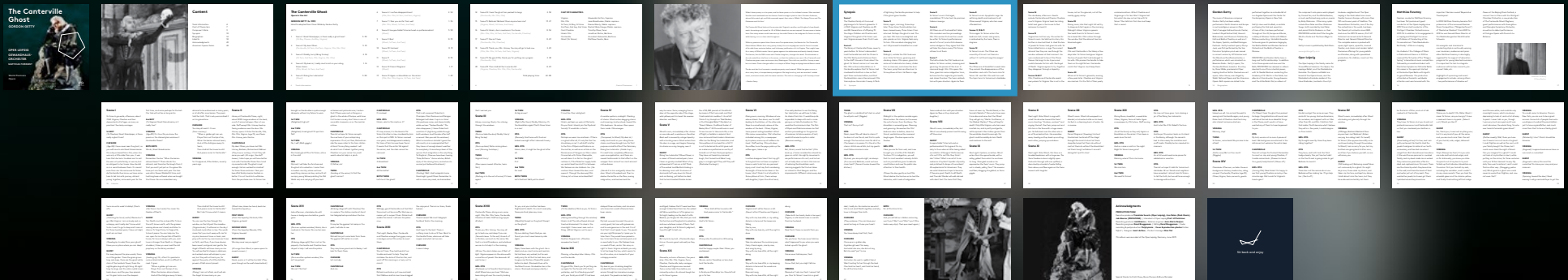
Thrice again Sir Simon enters the bedroom hall, moans and groans, is ambushed by the twins, flees in disgrace.

Scene 12

Sir Simon's room. The Otises are unworthy of his art. Let them do without it. Let them hang! He resigns!

Scene 13

The Otises are at breakfast a week later. They remark the disappearance of the bloodstain and visits. The twins miss Sir Simon. Mr. and Mrs. Otis wish him well. The topic turns to tomorrow's clambake.



Scene 14

The clambake, afternoon. Guests include Canterville and Cheshire. Cheshire courts Virginia. Virginia tears her riding habit and goes in the house to find someone to mend it.

Scene 15

Virginia has lost her way. She enters Sir Simon's room. He tells her his story. His brother-in-law had tried to steal the box of jewels Sir Simon had given his wife. Sir Simon killed him in a rage. The ancient almond tree they can see through the window withered at that moment. He was condemned to haunt the Chase forever. He longs to die. A pure soul could intercede for him with the Angel of Death. Virginia agrees to try. Together they disappear through a tapestry.

Scenes 16 & 17

Otis, Cheshire and Canterville search everywhere for Virginia. She is not in the

house, not on the grounds, not at the nearby gypsy camp.

Scene 18

Dining room, late that night. All will try to sleep and start again in the morning. Midnight strikes. Virginia appears. She leads them to Sir Simon's room. He is dead. Mrs. Otis notices through the window that the almond tree has bloomed again.

Scene 19

Otis and Canterville in the library a few days later. Sir Simon had given Virginia the box of jewels that had belonged to his wife. Otis presses Canterville to take them as the rightful heir. Canterville insists that Virginia must keep them.

Scene 20

All are at Sir Simon's gravesite, evening, a few years later. Cheshire and Virginia are married. It is the first of their yearly

commemorations. All but Cheshire and Virginia go in for tea. Won't Virginia tell him what she saw on her trip with Sir Simon? She tells him that she must keep that a secret.



Gordon Getty

The music of American composer Gordon Getty has been widely performed in North America and Europe in such prestigious venues as New York’s Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, London’s Royal Festival Hall, Vienna’s Brahmsaal, and Moscow’s Tchaikovsky Hall and Bolshoi Theatre, as well as at the Aspen, Spoleto, and Bad Kissingen Festivals. Getty’s earliest opera, *Plump Jack*, was first performed by the San Francisco Symphony and was revived in concert version by Ulf Schirmer and the Münchner Rundfunkorchester, a performance which was simulcast on Bavarian Radio. Getty’s opera, *The Canterville Ghost*, based on the story by Oscar Wilde, premiered at Oper Leipzig. Another Gothic themed one-act opera, *Usher House*, was staged by Welsh National Opera and San Francisco Opera. Both operas are slated to be

performed together as a double bill at Los Angeles Opera and the Center for Contemporary Opera in New York.

Getty’s *Joan and the Bells*, a cantata portraying the trial and execution of Joan of Arc, has been performed throughout the US, Europe and Russia, notably at Windsor Castle with Mikhail Pletnev conducting. His ballet *Ancestor Suite* was given its premiere staging by the Bolshoi Ballet and Russian National Orchestra at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow.

PENTATONE and Gordon Getty have a long and fruitful relationship. In addition to his three operas and *Joan and the Bells*, PENTATONE has released an album devoted to six of his orchestral pieces, with Sir Neville Marriner conducting the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields; two albums of choral works, *Young America* and *The Little Match Girl*; an album of

the composer’s solo-piano works played by Conrad Tao; and *The White Election*, a much-performed song cycle on poems by Emily Dickinson. Other song cycles include *Poor Peter* and *Four Dickinson Songs*, both recorded by Lisa Delan and pianist Kristin Pankonin on their PENTATONE recitals *And If the Song Be Worth a Smile* and *The Hours Begin to Sing*.

Getty’s music is published by Rork Music.

www.gordongetty.com

Oper Leipzig

The Oper Leipzig is the family name for three different divisions: the Opera, the Leipziger Ballet, and the Musikalische Komödie. The Opera and Ballet are based at the Opera House, and the Musikalische Komödie resides at the Haus Dreilinden, located in the city’s

Lindenau neighborhood. The Oper Leipzig is the third-oldest civic music theater house in Europe, with more than 325 continuous years of tradition. The Gewandhaus Orchestra, one of the top five orchestras in the world, has been the Opera’s pit orchestra since 1840. And since the 2011/12 season, Prof. Ulf Schirmer has served as both General Director and General Musical Director. The complete season is packed with opera, light opera, operetta, musical theater, and classic and modern ballet. Numerous offerings for young adults and families, along with specialized productions for children, round out the program.



Matthias Foremny

German conductor Matthias Foremny has been first permanent guest conductor at the Opera Leipzig since 2011/12 and chief conductor of the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra since 2013/14. In addition to his engagements in Leipzig and Stuttgart he serves as Professor of Conducting at the Conservatorium "Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy" of Music in Leipzig.

He studied at the Colleges of Music in Detmold and Vienna. In 1995 he received the first prize of the "Prague Spring" international music competition followed by a sensational debut with Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin. His career in the opera pit started at Komische Oper Berlin with Ligeti's *Le grand Macabre*. The production attracted enthusiastic worldwide attention and was honored with the

important German award 'Bayerischer Theaterpreis'.

In 2002 Matthias Foremny became first prizewinner of the renowned German Music Competition ("Dirigentenforum") of 'Deutscher Musikrat'. From 2003 to 2012 he was General Music Director at the Mecklenburgisches Staatstheater Schwerin.

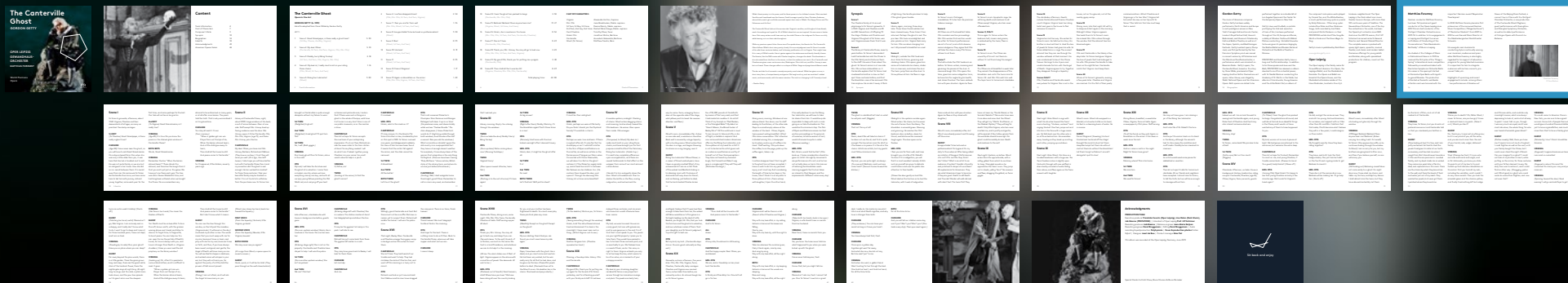
His energetic and charismatic conducting style is continually winning over musicians, audiences and press alike. Matthias Foremny is also highly regarded for his support of education programs for young talented musicians. It is important for him to integrate audiences with lecture-concerts, pre-concert talks, etc.

Highlights of upcoming and recent engagements include – among others – two performances of *Ariadne auf*

Naxos at the Beijing Music Festival, a concert tour in China with the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, a new production of *The Canterville Ghost/Pagliacci*, guest performances with Guangzhou and Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, as well as his debut performance at Cologne Opera with Puccini's *La Bohème*.



Matthias Foremny
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Scene I

Sir Simon's gravesite, afternoon, about 1960. Virginia, Cheshire and their descendants of all ages, as many as practical. Two baby carriages.

1st BOY

(To Cheshire) Great Grandpapa, is there really a ghost here?

CHESHIRE

(Age 88) I have never seen the ghost, so you will have to ask Great Grandmama. On a day as beautiful as this, when she was only a little older than you, it was here that she led a troubled soul to rest. He was not quite family, as we are, but an old guest in her house. How she did so is a secret between them. It is secret even from me. His name was Sir Simon de Canterville. Ever since, we have come here to bid him safe journey, old and young together, some each year for the

first time, and some perhaps for the last. Our trek will not be as long as his.

2nd BOY

(To Virginia) Great Grandmama, is it really true?

VIRGINIA

(Age 85) It is true. Do you know the poem on the stained glass window at Canterville Chase?

BOTH BOYS

We do, Great Grandmama.

VIRGINIA

Remember the line "When the barren almond bears"? There stands the almond, and there lies the bough from it that you and I just put on the grave. We have put one there each year. The tree was old in Queen Elizabeth's time, and had long been withered when we bought the Chase. No one remembers any

almond to have bloomed so many years, or at all after once barren. The poem told the truth. That is why we inscribed it on his gravestone.

CHESHIRE

You may all read it. It runs
(from memory)

"When a golden girl can win
Prayer from out the lips of sin,
When the barren almond bears,
And a little child give away its
tears,
Then shall all the house be still
And peace come to Canterville."

VIRGINIA

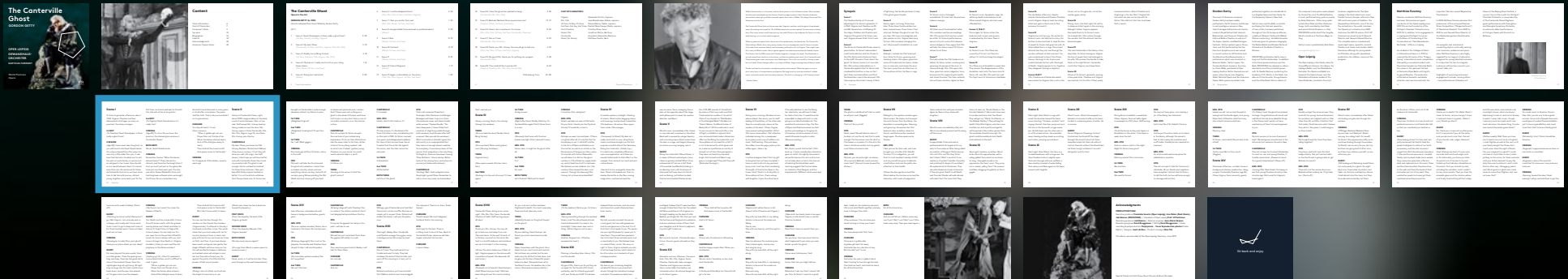
So it happened, little children, seventy years ago.

Scene II

Library at Canterville Chase, night, about 1890. Large windows at the back, a suit of armor between. Door at one side. Staff except Mrs. Umney lined up facing audience near the door. Mrs. Umney opens it. Enter Canterville, Otis, Mrs. Otis, Virginia (age 15), and Twins. Mrs. Umney joins the line.

CANTERVILLE

My dear Otises, you have met Mrs. Umney, Barbara, Richard and Mellows. (They bow or curtsey.) I trust they will serve you well. (At a sign, the staff leaves.) I also hope you will have better luck with Canterville Chase than I and my ancestors did. The ghost is real enough. He has worked his mischief for these three centuries. I fear your beautiful family may be treated no better. It is not too late to withdraw from the purchase now. Sir Simon has



brought us Cantervilles in quite enough
disrepute without my failure to warn.

1st TWIN
(Delighted) A ghost!

2nd TWIN
(Delighted) A real ghost! I'll spot him
first!

1st TWIN
No, I will! *(Both giggle.)*

VIRGINIA
Poor lonely ghost! Poor Sir Simon, alone
in the cold!

OTIS
My Lord, I will take the furniture and
the ghost at a valuation. I come from
a modern country, where we have
everything money can buy; and with all
our spry young fellows painting the Old
World red, and carrying off your best

actresses and prima donnas, I reckon
that if there were such a thing as a
ghost in the whole of Europe, we'd have
it at home in a very short time in one of
our public museums, or on the road as
a show.

CANTERVILLE
Then let us hope Sir Simon accepts
the overtures of your enterprising
impresarios. If not, as I fear, Richard can
ride the seven miles to the train station
at Ascot for anything needed. I will
do what I can if asked. I gather young
Cheshire is in your corner too, and I
would value his help in a pinch.

VIRGINIA
O, Father, do!

TWINS
(Looking at the armor) Is that the
ghost's armor?

CANTERVILLE
It is indeed.

MRS. OTIS
Hiram, what is this mark on it?

CANTERVILLE
If I may answer, it is the blood of Sir
Simon's brother-in-law, murdered by him
on this spot in 1585. Sir Simon survived
nine years, and disappeared suddenly.
No trace of him has ever been found.
It seems that the victim fell against
the armor, and the stain cannot be
removed.

1st TWIN
A bloodstain!

2nd TWIN
All the better!

BOTH TWINS
Let's hunt the ghost!

OTIS
That is all nonsense! Pinkerton's
Champion Stain Remover and Paragon
Detergent will clean it up in no time!
*(He produces some, and cleans briskly
while we hear "Yankee Doodle." The
stain disappears.)* I knew Pinkerton's
would do it! *(Lightning visible through
both windows, loud thunder after half
a second. Rain pounds the windows.)*
What a monstrous climate! I guess the
old country is so overpopulated that
they have not enough decent weather
for everybody. I have always been of the
opinion that emigration is the only thing
for England. *(Now we have been hearing
"Rule, Britannia." Armor salutes, British
style, at the closing tonic, and returns to
normal just before all look back.)*

CANTERVILLE
(Smiling) Well, I shall emigrate home.
Good night, good Otises. Remember to
call on me in any need, and remember



that I warned you.

Scene III

Library, morning. Empty. Sun shining through the windows.

TWINS

(From outside the door) Daddy! Hurry! Bring the key!

OTIS

(From upstairs) We're coming down now! (Running footsteps.)

TWINS

Virginia! Hurry!

(Door opens inward. All enter, twins first.)

2nd TWIN

(Rushing in to the suit of armor) It's here again!

1st TWIN

As big as ever!

VIRGINIA

(Right after them) Daddy, Mommy, it's the bloodstain again! That's three times in a row!

OTIS

(Pensively) And twice with the door locked overnight after I cleaned it away.

MRS. OTIS

Hiram, dear, it might be the ghost after all.

1st TWIN

It is!

2nd TWIN

For sure!

BOTH TWINS

Let's find him! We'll pull his sheet!

VIRGINIA

It must be. Poor cold ghost.

MRS. OTIS

Hiram, perhaps we were a little hasty. Do you think I should join the Psychical Society? It would do no harm.

OTIS

Perhaps we were. Live and learn. If there is a ghost after all, it's only fair that he should pay us rent. I will draft a letter to the firm of Myers and Podmore on the matter, as well as an article on the Permanence of Sanguinous Stains when Connected with Crime. Meanwhile, we will clean it as fast as the ghost restores it, if the Pinkerton supply holds up, and at least be rid of it in between. We Yankees can be stubborn too. (He motions them toward the door, and opens it. Through the doorway) Mrs. Umney, let us have some breakfast!

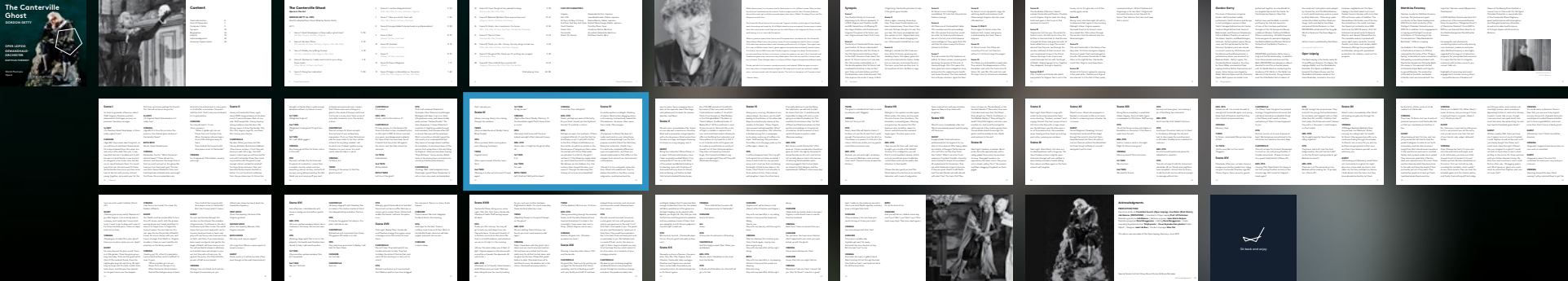
Scene IV

A corridor upstairs, midnight. Clanking of chains. Ghost enters dragging chains and moaning, lurches slowly toward the Otis bedroom. He arrives. Door opens from inside. Otis emerges.

OTIS

(Composed, to Ghost) My dear sir, I really must insist on your oiling those chains, and have brought you for that purpose a small bottle of the Tammany Rising Sun Lubricator. (Holds it up.) It is said to be completely efficacious upon one application, and there are several testimonials to that effect on the wrapper from some of our most eminent native divines.

(Hands it to him and gently closes the door. Ghost is thunderstruck. Then he dashes the bottle on the floor, roaring indignation, and lurches back the



way he came. Twins, emerging from a door at the opposite side of the stage, whiz pillows past his head. He reverses direction and flees.)

Scene V

Ghost's room, immediately after. A door on one side wall, a window on the other. Back wall is covered by a large tapestry with a hunting scene. Ghost enters from the door in a rage, and begins throwing his chains on a ring hanging near it.

GHOST

Rising Sun Lubricator! Pillows! Never, in a career of three hundred years, have I been so grossly insulted! What of my achievements? I am an artist! Think of the wicked Lord Boxford choking in his dressing room with the knave of diamonds half-way down his throat, and confessing, just before he died, that he had cheated Charles James

Fox of 50,000 pounds at Crockford's by means of that very card, and that I had made him swallow it. An artist! Think of my triumph as "Red Reuben, or the Strangled Babe"! My debut as "Gaunt Gibeon, the Blood-Sucker of Bexley Moor"! All the world was in awe! To see me was to take one's life, or die of fright, or babble in asylums! And now some wretched modern Americans offer me the Rising Sun Lubricator, and throw pillows at my head! An artist! It is not to be borne! An artist gives such an audience a performance worthy of himself, not of their thick perceptions. They have not heard my maniacal laugh, that turned Lord Raker's wig grey in a single night! They will! They will! (Illustrates the laugh.)

Scene VI

Dining room, morning. Windows at one side and back. Two doors, one for staff leading to the kitchen, at the other side. Steps to a small empty alcove at the window at the back. Otises, Virginia, twins present eating breakfast. All but Otis mime conversation. Otis' attention is divided among this, a newspaper by his place, and a cup of coffee in his hand. Staff waiting. Otis puts down the coffee, turns the page, picks up the coffee again, takes a sip.

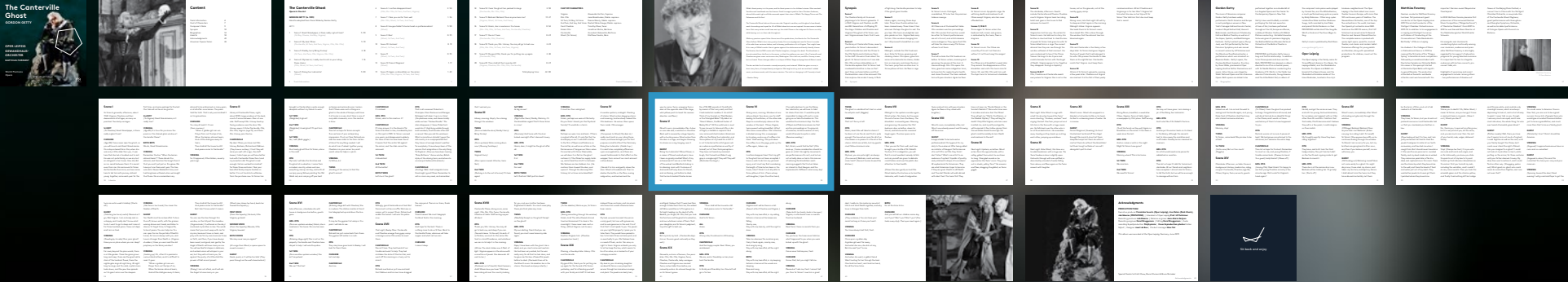
OTIS

I confess disappointment that my gift to the ghost has not been accepted. I have no wish to do him any personal injury, and I must say that considering the length of time he has been in the house, I don't think it is at all polite to throw pillows at him. (Twins whoop with laughter.) Upon the other hand,

if he really declines to use the Rising Sun Lubricator, we will have to take his chains from him. It would be quite impossible to sleep with such a noise going on outside the bedrooms. This would be the minimum step. The firm of Myers and Podmore assure me that eviction proceedings on the grounds of nuisance, let alone evasion of rent, would otherwise be quite in order. (Resumes reading.)

MRS. OTIS

But, Hiram, would that be fair? (Otis looks up.) Some consideration should be given an artist. His nightly movements are performances of a sort, and he has not actually done us harm. His manner of restoring the bloodstains each morning suggests that he has taken an interest in Paul Gauguin and the impressionists. Different colors every day!



TWINS

The ghost is colorblind! Let's bet on what he will pick next! (*Giggles*)

VIRGINIA

That isn't funny at all!

OTIS

Dears, dears! We will take his chains if he does not use the oil, and that is quite enough. The house has room for all of us if he leaves us in peace. It is the oil or the chains. Artists are artists, but my guests must follow minimum rules.

MRS. OTIS

My dear, you are quite right, as always. (*To a servant*) Barbara, could we have more toast? (*Servant hurries toward the kitchen.*)

Scene VII

Midnight in the upstairs corridor again. Ghost enters. No chains, but he wears the suit of armor from the library. The bloodstain is emerald green. Moaning and groaning. He reaches the Otis' bedroom door as before, clears his throat, and lets loose the maniacal laugh again. The door opens as he finishes.

MRS. OTIS

I fear you are far from well, and have brought you a bottle of Dr. Dobell's Tincture. If it is indigestion, you will find it a most excellent remedy. Artists such as yourself are given to delicate constitutions and owe the public due attention to their health.

(Closes the door gently as had Otis. Ghost dashes the tincture as he had the lubricator, with howls of indignation.

Twins ambush him with pea-shooters. Again he flees as they shriek with laughter.)

Scene VIII

Ghost's room, immediately after, but Ghost now already present and throwing off the armor.

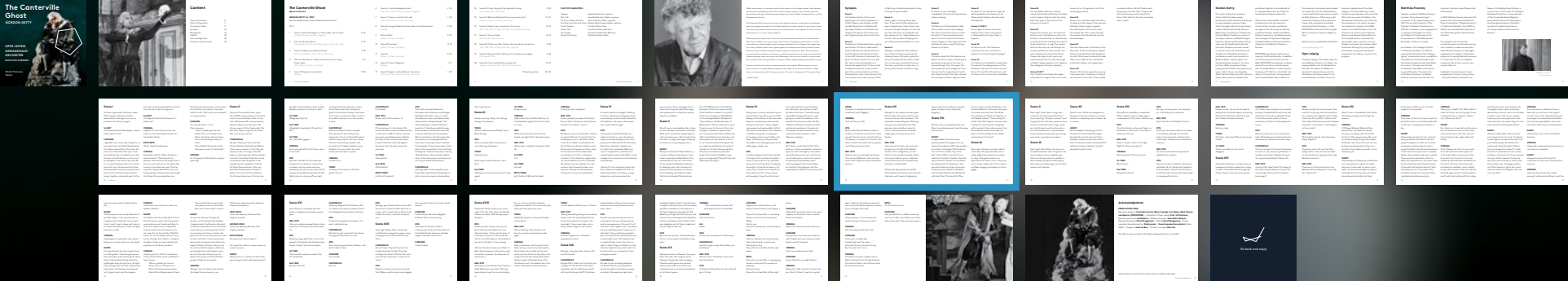
GHOST

Insupportable! To be lectured on professionalism! On hygiene! On my duty to the audience! After being called an imitator of Gauguin! Performances of a sort! Of a sort! Do they think I don't listen? What is an artist to an audience of oysters? A public of poultry and potatoes! A claue of cucumbers! All euphemisms for Americans. They are what Americans hope to become if they are good. Death to all! Death and Thunder! Murder will walk abroad with silent feet. The twins first! They

have not seen my "Dumb Daniel, or the Suicide's Skeleton"! None who have seen it are alive and sane. And the Otises! They will get my "Martin the Maniac, or the Masked Mystery"! They will beg for death! Only little Virginia, who has never insulted me, and is pretty and gentle, will be spared. A few hollow groans from the wardrobe should be enough. No ghost could honorably do less. Death and madness to the rest!

Scene IX

Next night. Upstairs, as before. Ghost enters from the opposite side, with a rolling gibbet from which he contrives to hang. Strangled sounds as he approaches the Twins' room. They jump out in sheets, yelling "boo!" He screams and flees, dragging the gibbet, as Twins giggle.



Scene X

Next night. Enter Ghost in rags with a bell. He slouches toward the Twins' room shouting, "Unclean, unclean!" and ringing the bell. One Twin jumps out and hits him in the face with a huge cream pie. He falls back over the other who is on all fours behind him. He scrambles away howling as they break up and hug each other, jumping up and down.



Scene XI

Next night. Enter Ghost, this time as a hooded headsman with a huge axe. The Twins' bedroom door is slightly open. He bursts through with axe uplifted, is drenched by a bucket of water falling from above, and flees again as the Twins screech with laughter.

Scene XII

Ghost's room. Ghost sits wrapped in a blanket, a hot water bottle on his head, his feet in a steaming basin of water. He is morose.

GHOST

Fiasco! Disgrace! (Sneezing) A-choo! Hooted and hector'd off the stage! Enough! No more! A-choo! Let them sleep like lumps! Let them do without me! Let them do without the bloodstain! Let them hang! I withdraw! I cancel! I abrogate! I quit! A-choo!

Scene XIII

Dining Room, breakfast, a week later. Otises, Virginia, Twins at table. Again a newspaper by Otis' place. Staff serving.

OTIS

(To all the family as they eat) Again no bloodstain on the armor. It has been a week since the last.

MRS. OTIS

And no noises or visits in the night. Might Sir Simon have gone?

VIRGINIA

Mommy, where? This is his home.

1st TWIN

We miss him.

2nd TWIN

We need Sir Simon!

OTIS

He may not have gone. I am missing a jar of the Rising Sun Lubricator.

MRS. OTIS

And I a bottle of Dr. Dobell's Tincture.

OTIS

And he put the armor back on its stand in the library, although the servants had to shine away the scratches and scuff marks. Possibly he has mended his manners.

MRS. OTIS

An artist would need some pause for sabbatical or vacation.

OTIS

Then let us hope it holds for tomorrow's clambake. All our friends and neighbors have accepted. I almost miss Sir Simon, to tell the truth, but we will have enough to manage without him.



MRS. OTIS

Indeed we will. I do so look forward to seeing Lord Canterville again, and young Duke Cecil of Cheshire. And Cecil may also interest someone else here.

VIRGINIA

Mommy, stop!

TWINS

Sir Simon, come back! We promise to be afraid!

1st TWIN

(Sotto voce) But not too much!
(Giggles)

Scene XIV

Clambake. Afternoon, outside. House in background. Archery, badminton, riding, croquet. Canterville, Cheshire (age 18), Otises, Virginia, Twins, servants, guests.

CANTERVILLE

(To Otises) I hear the ghost has packed his bags. Congratulations all round, and well done! He had done dreadful things in the Chase, and I would not have wanted any of them to have happened to you.

OTIS

My lord, we are not so sure. A pause at least. We had grown accustomed to the old sinner, but welcome the extra sleep.

CANTERVILLE

Then let us hope for the best. Remember to count on me, and young Cheshire, if trouble comes back. (Presses his hand. To a guest) Lady Harriet! (Moves off.)

MRS. OTIS

(Joining Otis) Dear Hiram! I'm happy to see that young Cheshire came by a few minutes ago. Did he ask for Virginia's hand again?

OTIS

He did, and got the same answer. They are both too young. And we Americans, for ourselves, are happiest with no titles other than Mr. and Mrs. I told him that that aside, if both become what I believe they will in a few years, I could imagine no finer match.

MRS. OTIS

My thoughts exactly. Have they been riding together?

OTIS

They have, and both took the third hedge cleanly. She just tore her habit on the fourth and is going inside to get Barbara to mend it.

MRS. OTIS

There she is at the service door now. Barbara will be making tea. I'll go help her. (Starts off.)

Scene XV

Ghost's room, immediately after. Ghost sits looking out gloomily through the window.

VIRGINIA

(Offstage) Barbara! Barbara! Does anyone hear me? Barbara! (Enters carrying torn riding habit. To herself) Sir Simon! (She approaches softly as he continues looking through the window. To Ghost) I am so sorry for you, but my brothers are going back to Eton soon, and then if you behave yourself, no one will annoy you.

GHOST

(Still looking out) Behaving oneself does not come easily to a ghost. For eight days now, I have oiled my chains, and taken my tincture, and kept my silence. I shall almost miss the twins, but they have abused me terribly. Let them



be the terror of Eton, and not of old residents at Canterville.

VIRGINIA

They have, Sir Simon, but you should not pretend innocence. Lord Canterville told us that you murdered your brother-in-law.

GHOST

(Now looking at her) It is true, and I am justly sentenced. He tried to steal the jewels I had given his sister at our tenth anniversary, and taunted me when I caught him. But I should never have done it. She was the one pure soul in a wicked family, and my deed made me as wicked. They came nine years later, after she died, and captured me in this room. There are the chains by which they bound me to the wall, and there the bowls of food and water just out of my reach. They wanted her jewels, but never got them. I perished where they bound me.

VIRGINIA

Starve you to death? Oh, Mister Ghost, I mean Sir Simon, are you hungry? I have a sandwich here in my pack. (Takes it out.) Would you like it?

GHOST

No, thank you, I never eat anything now; but it is very kind of you, all the same, and you are much nicer than the rest of your horrid, rude, vulgar, dishonest family.

VIRGINIA

Stop! (Stamps her foot.) It is you who are rude and horrid and vulgar, and as for dishonesty, you know you stole the paints out of my box to try and furbish up that ridiculous bloodstain on the armor. First you took all my reds, including the vermillion, and I couldn't do any more sunsets. Then you took the emerald-green and the chrome-yellow, and finally I had nothing left but indigo

and Chinese white, and could do only moonlight scenes, which are always depressing to look at, and not at all easy to paint. I never told on you, though I was very much annoyed, and it was most ridiculous, the whole thing; for who ever heard of emerald-green blood?

GHOST

(Rather meekly) Well, there you have me. It seems I am not much of a ghost. I could frighten as well as the next, until your family bought the Chase, but I could never stand the sight of blood. Can you imagine? In a ghost? I could not look at my brother-in-law's, while putting on the armor, for three centuries until your father cleaned it away. My duty then was to restore it, and I could find no other way. (Shrugging, palms out) What good is a ghost who could never do worse than frighten, and now not even that?

VIRGINIA

You could come to America. Once in New York, you are sure to be a great success. I know lots of people there who would give a hundred thousand dollars just to have a grandfather, and much more than that to have a family ghost.

GHOST

(Petulantly) I don't think I should like America.

VIRGINIA

(Angered) I suppose because we have no ruins and no curiosities!

GHOST

(Angered in return) No ruins! No curiosities! You have your navy and your manners.

VIRGINIA

(Spinning toward the door) Good evening! I will go and ask Papa to get the



twins an extra week's holiday! *(Starts off.)*

GHOST

(Catching her hand, rueful) Please don't go, Miss Virginia. I am so lonely and so unhappy, and I really don't know what to do. I want to go to sleep and I cannot. For three hundred years, I have not slept, and I am so tired.

VIRGINIA

(Kneeling by his side) Poor, poor ghost! Have you no place where you can sleep?

GHOST

Far away beyond the pine woods, there is a little garden. There the grass grows long and deep, there are the great white stars of the hemlock flower, there the nightingale sings all night long. All night long he sings, and the cold, crystal moon looks down, and the yew-tree spreads out its giant arms over the sleepers.

VIRGINIA

(Her face in her hands) You mean the Garden of Death.

GHOST

Yes. Death must be so beautiful. To lie in the soft, brown earth, with the grasses waving above one's head, and listen to silence. To forget time, to forgive life, to be at peace. You can help me. You can open for me the portals of Death's house, for Love is always with you, and Love is stronger than Death is. *(Virginia shudders.)* Have you ever read the old prophecy on the library window?

VIRGINIA

(Looking up) Oh, often! It is painted in curious black letters, and it is difficult to read. It goes:

"When a golden girl can win
Prayer from out the lips of sin,
When the barren almond bears,
And a little child give away its tears,

Then shall all the house be still
And peace come to Canterville."
But I don't know what it means.

GHOST

You can see the tree through this window, on the hill past the meadow. *(Virginia looks.)* It withered on the day I murdered my brother-in-law. The words mean that you must weep with me for my sins, because I have no tears, and pray with me for my soul, because I have no faith, and then, if you have always been sweet, and good, and gentle, the Angel of Death will have mercy on me. You will see fearful shapes in darkness, and wicked voices will whisper in your ear, but they will not harm you, for against the purity of a little child the powers of Hell cannot prevail.

VIRGINIA

(Rising) I am not afraid, and I will ask the Angel to have mercy on you.

(Ghost rises, kisses her hand, leads her toward the tapestry.)

FIRST VOICE

(From the tapestry) Go back, little Virginia, go back!

SECOND VOICE

(From the tapestry) Beware, little Virginia, beware!

BOTH VOICES

We may never see you again!"

(At a sign from Ghost, a space opens to reveal a cavern.)

GHOST

Quick, quick, or it will be too late! *(They pass through as the wall closes behind.)*



Scene XVI

Late afternoon, clambake site with house in background as before, guests gone.

MRS. OTIS

(From an upstairs window) Hiram, she is nowhere in the house. No one has seen her.

OTIS

(Entering stage right) She is not on the property. Canterville and Cheshire have stayed to help. I will wire the police.

1st TWIN

(From another upstairs window) She isn't anywhere!

2nd TWIN

We can't find her!

CANTERVILLE

(Entering stage left with Cheshire) She is nowhere. The station master at Ascot has telegraphed up and down the line.

OTIS

It may be the gypsies I let camp in the park. I will ride to see.

CANTERVILLE

Richard has just come back from there. The gypsies left earlier in a rush.

OTIS

They may have gone back to Bexley. I will look for them there.

CHESHIRE

Let me help.

CANTERVILLE

And me.

OTIS

Willingly, good Canterville and Cecil. But there must not be a scuffle. We have no reason yet to suspect them. Richard will saddle the horses. I will wire the police now.

Scene XVII

That night, Bexley Moor. Canterville and Cheshire emerge from gypsy camp in background as Otis enters to meet them.

CANTERVILLE

She isn't here. They had heard of our trouble and want to help. They had mistaken the date of Chorton Fair, and went off this morning in a hurry not to miss it.

OTIS

Richard overtook us just now and said that Mellows and his men have dragged

the carp pond. There is no trace, thank heaven.

CHESHIRE

Thank heaven! We must telegraph Scotland Yard in the morning.

OTIS

And hope for the best. There is nothing more to do until then. Back to Canterville Chase, where we will take supper and what rest we can.

CHESHIRE

I cannot sleep.



Scene XVIII

Canterville Chase, dining room, same night. Otis, Mrs. Otis, Twins, Canterville, Cheshire at table. Staff serving supper. All silent.

OTIS

Thank you, Mrs. Umney. You may all go to bed now, and sleep if you can. (Servants leave. To the rest) As each of us finishes, we must do the same. We trust in a kind Providence, and whatever we can do to help it in the morning.

(All rise. The clock strikes one. A flash of light. Virginia appears in the alcove with a small box of jewels. She descends. All rush to her.)

MRS. OTIS

(Flustered, out of breath) Good heavens, child! Where have you been? We have been riding all over the country looking

for you, and your mother has been frightened to death. You must never play these practical jokes any more.

TWINS

(Gleefully) Except on the ghost! Except on the ghost!

MRS. OTIS

My own darling, thank God you are found; you must never leave my side again.

VIRGINIA

Papa, I have been with the ghost. He is dead, and you must come and see him. He had been very wicked, but he was really sorry for all that he had done, and he gave me this box of beautiful jewels before he died. (She leads them all to the Ghost's room. His skeleton lies in the chains. She kneels and prays silently.)

TWINS

(To the skeleton) We love you, Sir Simon.

MRS. OTIS

(Seeing something through the window) Hiram, look! The old withered almond tree has blossomed. It is clear in the moonlight. I have never seen such a thing. (All but Virginia rush to see.)

VIRGINIA

God has forgiven him. (Cheshire squeezes her hand.)

Scene XIX

Morning, a few days later. Library. Otis and Canterville.

CANTERVILLE

My good Otis, thank you for putting me up again for the funeral of Sir Simon yesterday, and for attending yourself with your family and staff. It had been

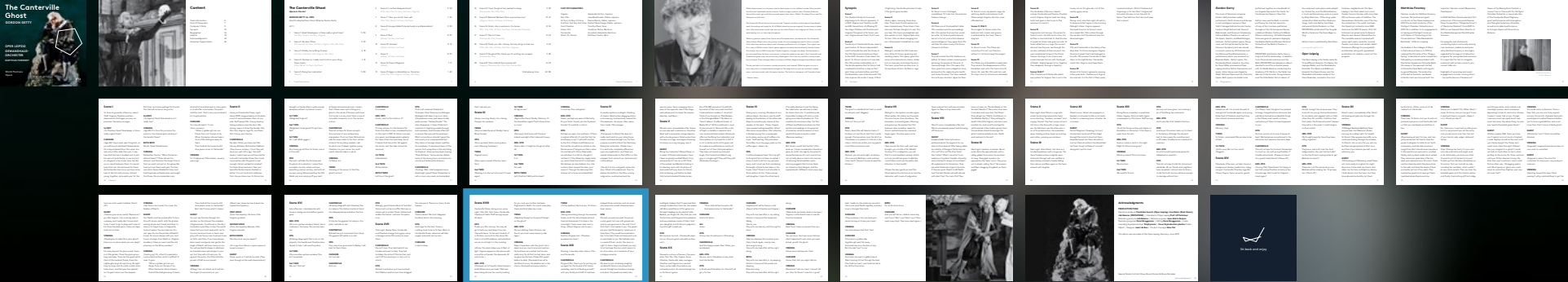
delayed three centuries, and mourners who knew him would otherwise have been scarce.

OTIS

My lord, we were honored. He was an unruly guest, but one with grievances, and he was generous in the end. It is of that that I must speak to you. The jewels are your rightful property. I press you to take them. They would have passed in law to his heirs three centuries past, and so eventually to you. We Yankees have no need of them, and in this case, no right to them. Virginia entreats you only to let her keep the box, which seems to be of no value, as a memento of your unhappy ancestor.

CANTERVILLE

My dear sir, your charming daughter rendered Sir Simon a very important service through her marvelous courage and pluck. The jewels are clearly hers,



and Egad, I believe that if I were heartless enough to take them from her, the wicked old fellow would be out of his grave in a fortnight, leading me the devil of a life. Besides, you forget, Mr. Otis, that you took the furniture and the ghost at a valuation, and own whatever comes of them. Trust your daughter, and Sir Simon's judgment, to put his gift to best use.

OTIS

But my lord, my lord...*(Canterville claps him on the arm good-naturedly as they exit.)*

Scene XX

Gravesite, autumn afternoon, five years later. Otis, Mrs. Otis, Virginia, Twins, Cheshire, Canterville, baby carriages. Cheshire and Virginia now married. Twins, inches taller than before, are mimed by actors. An almond bough lies on Sir Simon's grave.

VIRGINIA

"Then shall all the house be still
And peace come to Canterville."

CHESHIRE

And to Sir Simon.

ALL

Amen.

OTIS

At any rate, the almond is still bearing.

CANTERVILLE

And the happy couple. Dear Otises, you are blessed.

MRS. OTIS

We are, and in friendship no less, dear Lord Canterville.

OTIS

In family and friendship too. Now let's all go in for tea.

CHESHIRE

Virginia and I will be there in a bit.
(Exeunt all but Cheshire and Virginia.)

Stay with me, beautiful, in my calling,
Autumn is here and the leaves are falling,
One by one,
Stay with me, beauty, until the night is done.

VIRGINIA

Take me wherever the summer goes,
Carry it back again, rose by rose,
And song by song,
Stay with me, beautiful, all the night along.

BOTH

Stay with me, beautiful, in my keeping;
Autumn is here and the woods are sleeping,
Rose and song,
Stay with me, beautiful, all the night

along.

CHESHIRE

(Takes both her hands, looks in her eyes.)
Virginia, a wife should have no secrets from her husband.

VIRGINIA

Dear Cecil, I have no secrets from you.

CHESHIRE

Yes, you have. You have never told me what happened to you when you were locked up with the ghost.

VIRGINIA

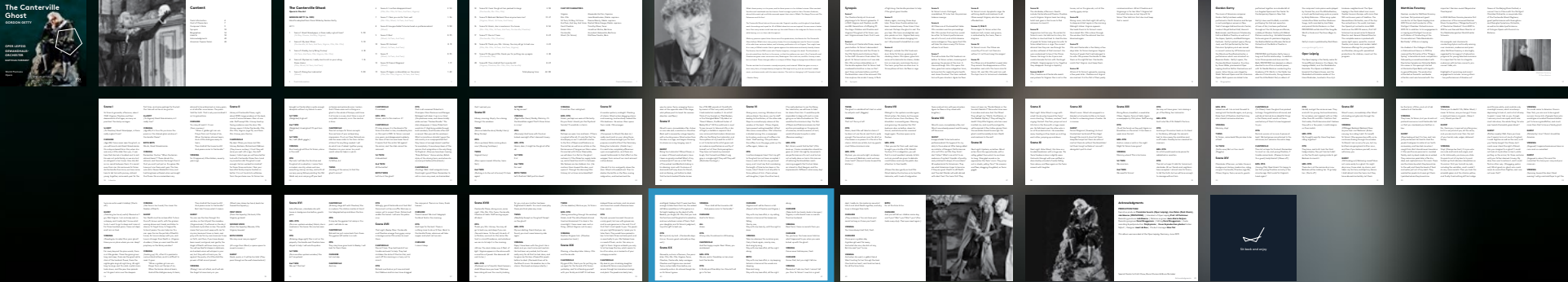
I have never told anyone, Cecil.

CHESHIRE

I know that, but you might tell me.

VIRGINIA

Please don't ask me, Cecil. I cannot tell you. Poor Sir Simon! I owe him a great



deal, I really do. He made me see what Life is and what Death signifies, and why Love is stronger than both.

CHESHIRE
(They embrace.) You can have your secret as long as I have your heart.

VIRGINIA
You have always had that, Cecil.

← **CHESHIRE**
Once upon a golden day
A golden girl went far away,
And what she saw, she did not say,
But she said “yes” to me.

VIRGINIA
And when she went, a gallant band
Went hunting for her through the land.
One took her heart, and took her hand,
For all the time to be.

BOTH
For all the time to be.

CHESHIRE
And you will tell our children some day, won't you? Won't you? Won't you? (She looks away shyly. Their eyes meet again.)



The Canterville Ghost

Cast

Libretto

Biographies

Acknowledgments

More



Acknowledgments

PRODUCTION TEAM

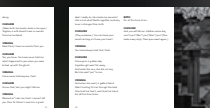
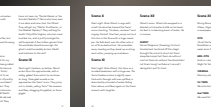
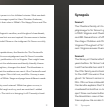
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The Canterville Ghost





Sit back and enjoy



PENTATONE

AMERICAN OPERAS

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The history of opera predates that of the United States. Going back to 16th century Italy, opera reflected a fascination with myth and was mounted for the benefit of the court. As opera spread its roots throughout western and eastern Europe, it evolved as a public form of entertainment and increasingly drew upon history and literature as inspiration. The early American settlers found such entertainment to be at odds with their puritanical ideology, but by the turn of the 18th century opera crept across the US border as a European import. By mid-century William Henry Fry became the first American composer to pen an opera, but opera was still predominantly associated with European composers.

This contributed to many in the country viewing opera as an elite art form representing antiquated interests, in languages they did not understand. As the American repertoire has expanded over the centuries, so have American audiences, drawn to contemporaneous topics played out in their native tongue. But American operas are no longer confined to listeners in the US; the works of American composers have been increasingly heard throughout the world. American opera embodies the individualism of its homeland, and with each generation new musical language has found its voice in American opera – a voice that resonates with all who love the music, the drama and the brilliance that is opera.



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