April Arias

La Forza Del Destino

Giuseppe Verdi

YBF! Dance Event

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Act One

At the heavily guarded Calatrava Hotel, a ball celebrating the birthday of Leonora-daughter of a powerful general-and attended by the elite, government officials, and high-ranking military officers is concluding. Leonora's lover, Alvaro, a self-conscious, poor young man, meets her clandestinely then rushes off.

Leonora's father enters to drunkenly bid her goodnight and disparages Alvaro, saying that he is unworthy of his daughter. He leaves, and Leonora, torn between her devotion to her father and her love for Alvaro, tells her maid that Alvaro will return later that night and they will elope. When he arrives, she asks him for more time, and he accuses her of no longer loving him. She agrees to leave, but her father suddenly appears, berating Leonora and ridiculing Alvaro for his lower-class upbringing. He condemns Leonora for bringing shame to the family and threatens Alvaro with arrest. Alvaro insists that he loves Leonora and that she is unsullied. To prove that he is not a threat, Alvaro throws down his gun. It accidentally fi res, fatally wounding the general, who dies cursing his daughter. The lovers are separated as Alvaro escapes.

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Act Two

At an officers' club, Leonora's brother, Carlo, assuming the identity of a military cadet, is hunting for his sister and her lover to avenge his father's murder. Leonora, disguised as a man, enters. Separated from Alvaro, she is traveling with a driver, Trabuco, who endures jibes as to the identity of his passenger. Leonora recognizes her brother, but seeing him in his drunken state, she withdraws. Preziosilla, a mysterious entertainer, performs for the crowd of soldiers, telling fortunes and encouraging them to seek glory in battle. Carlo watches, not realizing that his father's death has triggered a chain reaction that is about to spark a devastating war. Preziosilla tells Carlo's fortune and sees through his disguise. Meanwhile, Leonora wonders how she can escape from her vengeful brother. Pilgrims en route to Holy Week celebrations pass by, and everyone joins in prayer. Alcade, the bartender, urges Carlo to tell the gathering what brought him there. Carlo obscures his identity, claiming to be "Pereda" and speaking of his friend, who is bent on avenging his father's death at the hands of his sister's lover. As the others in the club pass out, Carlo falls asleep, exhausted.

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Act Two - Continued

Leonora flees the city in a rainstorm and skids off the road, crashing her car. She makes her way to a monastery, where Fra Melitone tries to send her away until the next morning. She begs to see Guardiano, the Father Superior. When he appears, she is stunned by his resemblance to her father. She asks him to allow her to live in the monastery's hermitage, devoting herself to God. When Guardiano understands who she is and learns that her brother has vowed to kill her, he agrees to let her stay, ordering the friars to prepare for her initiation. Meanwhile, Carlo, mourns over his father's grave.

Leonora's initiation rite begins. She cuts her hair and passes among the friars to the hermitage, where she will spend the rest of her life in solitude. As she does, she sees an apparition of the Virgin Mary above her.

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Act Three

Alvaro has been conscripted into the army and sent to the front. Bitter and broken, he laments his outcast state, mourning Leonora, whom he believes is dead. He prays to her to have pity on him. Hearing a brawl nearby, Alvaro drives away a pack of thieves attacking a newly arrived soldier. It is Carlo, but neither is aware of the other's identity, as both are using assumed names. Carlo thanks Alvaro for saving his life, and the two swear friendship in life and death, then run off to battle.

Alvaro is carried back to camp, seriously wounded. He asks Carlo to promise to safeguard his private papers and, in the event of his death, to burn them. Carlo agrees, but when his friend is removed for surgery, he wonders if Alvaro might be the man who killed his father and dishonored his sister. Looking among Alvaro's belongings, he finds a portrait of Leonora. When word arrives that Alvaro will live, Carlo exults that he will be able to exact his revenge on his enemy.

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Act Three - Continued

A group of entertainers begins a performance for the wounded soldiers, led by Preziosilla and her dancers, and joined by a peddler selling cheap merchandise. Preziosilla tells their fortunes and leads a marching chorus to raise Alvaro's spirits. Carlo appears, bearing a cake for Alvaro, pretending to be his friend.

A few months later, Carlo confronts a recovered Alvaro, confessing that he has found out Alvaro's true identity, and challenges him to fight. Alvaro tries to pacify him, saying that if Leonora is still alive, as Carlo says, they should join forces to search for her. Carlo insists that he will kill both Alvaro and Leonora to obtain revenge, driving Alvaro into a rage. They fight, but Alvaro stops himself from delivering the deadly blow and instead turns his knife on himself, cutting his own face. Repenting his violent anger, he resolves to enter a monastery.

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Act Four

Though the war is over, the world is on the verge of apocalypse, with hunger and poverty widespread. A group of refugees waits at a subway station for a complaining Melitone to hand out food, while Father Guardiano chastises Melitone for being impatient with the poor. Carlo, having searched for Alvaro for five years, arrives and demands to see Father Raffaele, the name that Alvaro has taken after joining Guardiano and Melitone's order. As Carlo waits, he vows to kill his enemy. Alvaro appears and pleads for peace between them, but again Carlo goads him, and they rush off to fight as the ghost of the general appears above them.

Leonora emerges in a state of distress and prays for the peace that continues to elude her; in her heart, she still loves Alvaro. Hearing a commotion nearby, she retreats, only to be called from her hiding place by Alvaro himself. Having mortally wounded Carlo, he has come to ask the hermit to give absolution to the dying man. They recognize each other, and Alvaro cries that once again he has the blood of her family on his hands. Leonora goes to her brother, who deals her a mortal blow. Alvaro and Leonora say farewell, and Alvaro hears the voice of the ghost of Leonora's father admonishing him to humble himself and accept the will of God. As Leonora dies, she forgives Alvaro and, with her last gasp, proclaims that she will await Alvaro in heaven.

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