Mom Sings an Aria: Part II

Voices

Cohen:

I love Maria Callas.

I love Maria

Piano

She's the great-est

Callas.

Callas.
I love Maria Callas.

I love Maria Callas.
D'Angelo:

I can't stand her voice. She sounds like a crow, screeches like an owl, bleeps like a sheep. And on top of
that, she's ugly.

Maria Callas can act, can sing, can hold an audience.
24 Fast

D'Angelo:

in her hand.

With a voice like that, the sooner she's

24 Fast

Lennie:

off the stage the better.

And these
men didn't conduct these arguments in gentlemanly voices. I

heard Caruso sing "Aida" in nineteen-twenty-one.
Ca - ra - so nev - er sang "A - i - da" af - ter nine - teen - sev - en -

D'Angelo: Lennie: I g - cor - a - mus. The - e

19

- 7 -
Arguments were getting worse lately.

Such beauty! Such sadness!
Cohen:

Nata Tebaldi is my heroine. Such beautiful singing. Te-

Baldi sounds just like a cracked phonograph record.
I love Maria Callas! She's the greatest prima donna. With the voice of a rooster. A week ago a
climax was reached.

Cal-las was singing "La Traviata."

Cohen had a bad cold.
Cohen: 67

You are sneezing so much you ought to be home.

Cohen:

wouldn't miss "La Traviata" even if I had
D'Angelo: 

double pneumonia.

I could live happily

for the rest of my life without hearing Callas butcher "La Traviata."
Lights up on dining area again.

I'm here to-night for Richard Tucker.

That Richard Tucker, such a wonderful boy;
...so much at home at the synagogue as in the opera. Oh,

...oh, oh, what a proud mother he must have.
D'Angelo:

I will probably groan through Calas's big aria.

Cohen:

If you do that, I'll get even with you the next
Mom:

And the next time Te-bal-di was time Te-bal-di is singing.

Lennie:

Sing-ing was the night of the murder.
Three nights ago Tebaldi sang Tosca.

Such a beautiful opera! Everything in it's dramatic!
Shirley:

But such an unrealistic plot!

Mom:

Don't you think, Mrs. Lowenstein? Unrealistic, I don't think so.
You should know some things that go on in this building!

Did n’t Policheck, he was our janitor, have his eye up...
on his wife's baby-sitter. He knew he would

never get her; so he thought up the worst threat that's
He said he would drop his own son out the window and blame it on the baby-sitter.
if she wouldn't give herself to him.

That was worse than Scarpio who at least

didn't threaten to kill his own son.
So he held his own son out the window.

The boy's screams made the neighbors call the super.
The babysitter had passed out. She had escaped a fate that's
Shirley:

far worse than death, if you know what I mean.

Mom:

horrible! So Tosca isn't so unrealistic.

Lennie:

Anyway, D'Angelo got so
worried he called Cohen up.

please don't make any trouble during the performance.
Cohen: You can't talk me out of it. When Te-bal-di hits her high C in her big aria I will start boo-ing, boo-ing, boo-ing, boo-ing, boo-ing.
Mom:

What a terrible threat for a civilized man to make. Who heard him say it?

Lennie:

His nephew who was going over some ac
count books.

Later on Dr. Angelo

Mom:

He claims. I see. The nephew didn't hear that.

claims Cohen calmed down.
He was out of the room later. On the night of "Tosca" no one said a word. On very cold nights like that one the standing room regulars
had one person get coffee for everyone.

It was D'Angelo's turn. He went and brought back four containers.
[They shield their bodies from the wind and drink their coffee.]

for Cohen and himself and two old lady friends of theirs.

That night Tebali was in great voice. It was almost time for her big ari-ga.
Mom:

Such a beautiful aria! Vis - si d'arte,

vis - si - d'a - mo - re. non fe - ci - mai male ad a - ni - ma

- 34 -
Spoken a la Marlon Brando:

Vi - va. I could have been a contender.

An - y more soup an - y - one?

[He falls to the ground.]

Eennie: Cohen: D'Angelo:

Just 3 a - bout then Co - hen groaned: I'm sick!

- 35 -
Some-body go for a doctor. Cohen, what's the matter? You no -

Lenny: good! You de-serve to die for what you did! He had been poi-soned. The
dose that he swallowed had taken two hours to take effect. It had to have been

Mom:

So you are in the coffee D'Angelo brought to him.
rest-ed him for mur-der?

No, not yet. We've got an air-tight case. Per-fect op-port-

un-it-y. No oth-er sus-pects. The dy-ing man's -
ac - cu - sa - tions, but no ju - ry is go - ing to be - lieve D' An - gel - o killed him to

Let me think a - bout this

stop him from boo - ing an op - era sing - er.
while I get the chicken.

[Mom leaves.]

Slowing

It

Slower

Slower
Shirley:

I know your mother's being helpful.

Sometimes she solves your cases. Sometimes she makes you feel that
you're a failure. That's something that I would never do. I never would do.
I love you, Lennie. You don't need to play the violin.

You don't ever have to change yourself for me.
You know I'll always love you just as you are.

You know I'll never try to change you. I
Mom enters.

I love you just the way you are.

Mom: OK, I have two questions.
Here’s question number one: You mentioned Cohen had a cold when Cal­las sang. But now I ask you, did he have the same cold when Te­

Lennie: Yes, the old ladies said he was sneezing in the line and
Now for the second during the performance.

question. Here's question number two:
Did someone find an envelope in Cohen's pocket?

with absolutely nothing in it?

How did you know?
Mom:

I didn't know,

Yes, we found an empty envelope.

but I knew D'Angelo couldn't have planned to kill Cohen during The
Baldini's performance. He loved her too much.

Never in a million years would he do something to spoil her performance.
257 So I knew somebody else had to do it. But if D'Angelo
257
260 didn't poison him, who could have poisoned the coffee?
Who say the coffee was poisoned?

But I told you about the autopsy.
Flop-sy, mop-sy, autopsy! Use a little more imagination.

Why's an empty envelope?
in his pocket? Because

something in it he had needed earlier, something needed well be-
Shirley:

before the opera. Mrs. Lowenstein, what are you talking about?

Mom:

I'm talking about Cohen's cold. A real opera.
lover like Cohen would do everything he could
to avoid a sneeze during a performance. In an envelope he
puts a cold pill. This, he hopes will help to dry his nose up.

and he drinks the cold pill down with coffee half an hour before the
Shirley: "Mom"

Lennie: Nobody saw him take the pill.

Mom: Nobody say him take the pill.

Why should they see him?

To drink the coffee.
he turned away from the wind.

But the old ladies

said he was sneezing during the performance.

Shirley dear, you are so sweet.
I'm glad to see I didn't

That proves only that it wasn't a real cold pill.

If Cohen's pill was poisoned, where did he get it?
From someone close to him he thought could be trusted, someone very close to him he

Mom and Shirley:

thought could be trusted.

The nephew!

My God, Mom, I think you're right! The nephew!
Cohen's nephew manages the drug store Cohen owned.

He has access to the poison he could put in a cold pill.
He is Cohen's only relative. And he inherits Cohen's

Mom:

There you are. You couldn't ask for a more

store and savings.
ordinary motive for a murder, not one bit

It was the operatic.

But what made you suspect the nephew?
lie he told.

According to the nephew, Cohen said,

When Tebaldi hit her high C, then I'll start
there's no high C. boo - ing. But in "Vi - sey d' ar - ty" there's no high C.

An - y op - era lov - er would have known that.
So it stands to reason that the nephew lied.

But why did Cohen accuse D'Angel?
Mom:

He was looking

at D'Angelo, but he still was living in the world of opera.
He was talking to Scarpia: "You no good; you deserve to die for what you did."

An opera lover
378 goes on being an opera lover right up to the end.

Shirley:

382 Poor old Cohen, such a terrible way to go! Yes, death by poisoning!
Mom:

Ah, terrible!
Yes, terrible!
But that isn't the worst part.

He never heard that wonderful aria:
'Vis si d'arte, la, ah, ah, ah.
Mom:

But he loved music!

Lennie:

But Cohen didn't like Tebaldi.

Shirley:

[Shirley exits.]

Mrs. Lowenstein, let me get these dishes.
Mom:

You know something, Lennie.

You need to pay more attention to your wife.