

OPERAS FOR JULY 2021

7 July	Leoncavallo	Pagliacci
	Mascagni	Cavalliera Rusticana
14	Puccini	La Rondine
21	Fall / Korngold	Rosen aus Florida
28	Goldmark	Die Köningen von Saba

Cavalleria rusticana; Italian for "rustic chivalry") is an opera in one act by Pietro Mascagni to an Italian libretto by Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti and Guido Menasci, adapted from a play and short story written by Giovanni Verga. Considered one of the classic verismo operas, it premiered on 17 May 1890 at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome. Since 1893, it has often been performed in a so-called Cav/Pag double-bill with Pagliacci by Ruggero Leoncavallo.

Synopsis

Place: A 19th-century Sicilian village

Time: Easter morning

Before the action takes place, the young villager Turiddu had returned from military service to find that his fiancée Lola had married the carter Alfio while Turiddu was away. In revenge, Turiddu had seduced Santuzza, a young woman in the village. As the opera begins, Lola, overcome by her jealousy of Santuzza, has begun an adulterous affair with Turiddu.

Scene: The main square of the village. Offstage, Turiddu is heard singing The Siciliana – "O Lola, lovely as the spring's bright blooms" (O Lola c'hai di latti la cammisa). To one side is the church; to the other is Lucia's wine shop and the house where she lives with her son, Turiddu. The villagers move about the square, singing of the beautiful spring day (Gli aranci olezzano sui verdi margini – "The air is sweet with orange blossoms") and a hymn to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Some villagers enter the church, and others wander off still singing.

Santuzza, having slept with Turiddu and suspecting that he has betrayed her for Lola, is distraught and approaches Lucia as she comes out of her house. Santuzza asks for Turiddu, but Lucia replies that he has gone to another town to fetch some wine. Santuzza tells her that he was seen during the night in the village. Lucia asks her inside to talk, but just at that moment Alfio arrives on his wagon, accompanied by the villagers. He praises the joys of a teamster's life and the beauty of Lola his bride. Alfio asks Lucia for some of her fine old wine. She tells him it has run out and Turiddu has gone away to buy more. Alfio replies that he had seen Turiddu early that morning near his cottage. Lucia starts to express surprise, but Santuzza stops her.

Alfio leaves. The choir inside the church is heard singing the Regina Coeli. Outside, the villagers sing an Easter Hymn, joined by Santuzza. The villagers enter the church, while Santuzza and Lucia remain outside. Lucia asks Santuzza why she signalled her to remain silent when Alfio said that he had seen Turiddu that morning. Santuzza exclaims, Voi lo sapete – "Now you shall know"), and tells Lucia the story of her seduction by Turiddu and his affair with Lola. Lucia pities Santuzza, whom the villagers are considering excommunicating for her seduction. Santuzza cannot enter the church, but begs Lucia to go inside and pray for her.

Turiddu arrives. Santuzza upbraids him for pretending to have gone away, when he was actually seeing Lola. Lola enters the square singing. She mocks Santuzza and goes inside the church. Turiddu turns to follow Lola, but Santuzza begs him to stay. Turiddu pushes her away. She clings to him. He loosens her hands, throws her to the ground, and enters the church. Alfio arrives looking for Lola. Santuzza tells him that his wife has betrayed him with Turiddu. Alfio swears to take vendetta (revenge) which causes Santuzza to repent for having disclosed the affair and begs Alfio to stop to no avail.

The square is empty as the orchestra plays the famous Intermezzo.

The villagers come out of the church. Turiddu is in high spirits because he is with Lola and Santuzza appears to have gone. He invites his friends to his mother's wine shop where he sings a drinking song, Viva, il vino spumeggiante – "Hail to the bubbling wine!". Alfio joins them. Turiddu offers him wine, but he refuses it. All understand that trouble is in the air. The women leave, taking Lola with them. In a brief exchange of words, Alfio challenges Turiddu to a duel. Following Sicilian custom, the two men embrace, and Turiddu, in a token of acceptance, bites Alfio's ear, drawing blood which signifies a fight to the death. Alfio leaves and Turiddu calls Lucia back. He tells her that he is going outside to get some air and asks that she be a kindly mother to Santuzza if he should not return: Un bacio, mamma! Un altro bacio!—Addio! – "One kiss, mother! One more kiss! – Farewell!".

Turiddu rushes out. Lucia, weeping, wanders aimlessly around outside her house. Santuzza approaches and throws her arms around her. The villagers start to crowd around. Voices are heard in the distance and a woman cries, "They have murdered Turiddu!" Santuzza faints and Lucia collapses in the arms of the women villagers.

There's an interesting history of the opera here:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cavalleria_rusticana

Pagliacci: (meaning "Clowns") is an Italian opera in a prologue and two acts, with music and libretto by Ruggero Leoncavallo. It is the only Leoncavallo opera that is still widely performed. Opera companies have frequently staged Pagliacci with Cavalleria rusticana by Mascagni, a double bill known colloquially as 'Cav and Pag'.

Pagliacci premiered at the Teatro Dal Verme in Milan on 21 May 1892, conducted by Arturo Toscanini.

There's an interesting website here: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pagliacci>

Synopsis

Place: Calabria, near Montalto, on the Feast of the Assumption

Time: between 1865 and 1870.

Prologue

During the overture, the curtain rises. From behind a second curtain, Tonio, dressed as his commedia character Taddeo, addresses the audience (Si può?... Si può?... Signore! Signori! ... Un nido di memorie). He reminds the audience that actors have feelings too, and that the show is about real people.

Act 1. At three o'clock in the afternoon, the commedia troupe enters the village to the cheering of the villagers. Canio describes the night's performance: the troubles of Pagliaccio. He says the play will begin at "ventitré ore", an agricultural method of time-keeping that means the play will begin an hour before sunset. As Nedda steps down from the cart, Tonio

offers his hand, but Canio pushes him aside and helps her down himself. The villagers suggest drinking at the tavern. Canio and Beppe accept, but Tonio stays behind. The villagers tease Canio that Tonio is planning an affair with Nedda. Canio warns everyone that while he may act the foolish husband in the play, in real life he will not tolerate other men making advances to Nedda. Shocked, a villager asks if Canio really suspects her. He says no, and sweetly kisses her on the forehead. As the church bells ring vespers, he and Beppe leave for the tavern, leaving Nedda alone.

Nedda is frightened by Canio's vehemence (*Qual fiamma avea nel guardo*), but the birdsong comforts her (*Stridono lassù*). Tonio returns and confesses his love for her, but she laughs. Enraged, Tonio grabs Nedda, but she takes a whip, strikes him and drives him off. Silvio, who is Nedda's lover, comes from the tavern, where he has left Canio and Beppe drinking. He asks Nedda to elope with him after the performance and, though she is afraid, she agrees. Tonio, who has been eavesdropping, leaves to inform Canio so that he might catch Silvio and Nedda together. Canio and Tonio return and, as Silvio escapes, Nedda calls after him, "I will always be yours!"

Canio chases Silvio, but does not catch him and does not see his face. He demands that Nedda tell him the name of her lover, but she refuses. He threatens her with a knife, but Beppe disarms him. Beppe insists that they prepare for the performance. Tonio tells Canio that her lover will give himself away at the play. Canio is left alone to put on his costume and prepares to laugh (*Vesti la giubba* – "Put on the costume").

Act 2. As the crowd arrives, Nedda, costumed as Colombina, collects their money. She whispers a warning to Silvio, and the crowd cheers as the play begins.

Colombina's husband Pagliaccio has gone away until morning, and Taddeo is at the market. She anxiously awaits her lover Arlecchino, who comes to serenade her from beneath her window. Taddeo returns and confesses his love, but she mocks him. She lets Arlecchino in through the window. He boxes Taddeo's ears and kicks him out of the room, and the audience laughs.

Arlecchino and Colombina dine, and he gives her a sleeping potion to use later. When Pagliaccio returns, Colombina will drug him and elope with Arlecchino. Taddeo bursts in, warning that Pagliaccio is suspicious of his wife and is about to return. As Arlecchino escapes through the window, Colombina tells him, "I will always be yours!"

As Canio enters, he hears Nedda and exclaims "Name of God! Those same words!" He tries to continue the play, but loses control and demands to know her lover's name. Nedda, hoping to keep to the performance, calls Canio by his stage name "Pagliaccio," to remind him of the audience's presence. He answers with his arietta: *No! Pagliaccio non son!* He sings that if his face is pale, it is not from the stage makeup but from the shame she has brought him. The crowd, impressed by his emotional performance, which they do not realize is real, cheers him. Nedda, trying to continue the play, admits that she has been visited by the innocent Arlecchino. Canio, furious and forgetting the play, demands the name of her lover. Nedda swears she will never tell him, and it becomes apparent that they are not acting. Silvio begins to fight his way toward the stage. Canio, grabbing a knife from the table, stabs Nedda. As she dies, she calls: "Help! Silvio!". Silvio attacks Canio, but Canio kills Silvio also. The horrified audience then hears the celebrated final line:

La commedia è finita! – "The comedy is finished!"

La rondine (The Swallow) is a comic opera in three acts by Giacomo Puccini to an Italian libretto by Giuseppe Adami, based on a libretto by Alfred Maria Willner and Heinz Reichert (de). It was first performed at the Grand Théâtre de Monte Carlo (or the Théâtre du Casino) in Monte Carlo on 27 March 1917.

Composition history

In autumn 1913, the directors of Vienna's Carltheater commissioned Puccini to compose a Viennese operetta. After confirming that it could take the form of a comic opera with no spoken dialogue in the style of *Der Rosenkavalier*, "only more entertaining and more organic," he agreed. The work proceeded for two years, sometimes intensely, sometimes with great difficulty, and in spring 1916 the opera was finished. The originally intended Viennese première was impeded by the outbreak of World War I and the entrance of Italy in the Alliance against Austria-Hungary, hence the Opéra de Monte-Carlo was chosen as the location to present it, with Gilda dalla Rizza and Tito Schipa in the leading roles. A feature of the music is Puccini's use of modern dance rhythms, such as the tango, to denote the various characters.

In Italy, Puccini offered the work to his editor Tito Ricordi, who declined to buy it, dismissing it as "Bad Lehár"; thus Ricordi's rival, Lorenzo Sonzogno obtained the right to give the first performance outside Austria-Hungary and moved the premiere to Monégasque neutral territory. At the premiere in Monte Carlo in 1917 the initial reception by the public and press was warm. However, despite the artistic value of the score, *La rondine* has been one of Puccini's less successful works; "In box office terms, it was the poor cousin to the other great hits." There is no established final version of it, Puccini being dissatisfied, as often, with the result of his work; he revised it many times to the point of making three versions (1917, 1920, 1921), with two completely different endings, but died before clearly deciding on a final version.

Revised versions

In the second version, which was premiered at Teatro Massimo, Palermo, in 1920, Prunier is the deciding force in Magda's decision to leave Ruggero in Act 3, and she departs without seeing her lover. In the third version of the opera, Puccini changed the final act again, adding a scene in which Rambaldo comes to beg Magda to return to him, and ending with Ruggero's discovery (via an anonymous telegram) of who Magda really is, his angry rebuke of her, and his decision to leave her for ever. At the end of this version, Magda is left alone with Lisette. The third version was not heard until 1994 in Turin. Moreover, a fire at Casa Sonzogno archives caused by Allied bombing during the war destroyed parts of the score which had to be restored based on the surviving vocal-piano arrangements. The orchestration of the third version was finally completed in authentic Puccinian style by Italian composer Lorenzo Ferrero at the request of Teatro Regio di Torino and subsequently performed there on 22 March 1994.

As part of a 1958 celebration marking the centenary of Puccini's birth, the Teatro di San Carlo at Naples, Italy, staged a revival of *La rondine*, at that time one of Puccini's least-performed operas. The revival was well-received, with audiences and critics deeming it a success.

Roles

Magda de Civry

soprano

Lisette, her maid	soprano
Ruggero Lastouc	tenor
Prunier, a poet	tenor
Rambaldo Fernandez, Magda's protector	baritone
Périchaud	baritone / bass
Gobin	tenor
Crébillon	bass/baritone
Rabonnier	baritone
Yvette	soprano
Bianca	soprano
Suzy	mezzo-soprano
A butler	bass
A voice	soprano

Members of the bourgeoisie, students, painters, elegantly dressed ladies and gentlemen, grisettes, flower girls and dancing girls, waiters.

Synopsis

Place: Paris and the French Riviera. Time: Mid-19th century.

Act 1 Magda's salon, Paris

At a cocktail party hosted by the courtesan Magda, the poet Prunier expounds his theories on love. Magda's friends Yvette, Bianca and Suzy playfully mock him, while Lisette, Magda's maid, tells him he does not know what he is talking about. Prunier takes offence and Magda orders Lisette to leave. Prunier maintains that no one is immune to romantic love and sings the first verse of his latest song about Doretta, who rejected a king as her suitor because of the value she placed on true love. He does not know how to finish the song, so Magda takes over and provides the second verse: she recounts how Doretta falls in love with a student (Aria: *Chi il bel sogno di Doretta*). Magda's guests are charmed by her performance and her long-term protector Rambaldo gives her a pearl necklace. Lisette enters to announce the arrival of a young man – the son of an old school friend of Rambaldo. Lisette is ordered by Rambaldo to bring in the guest. Suddenly nostalgic, Magda recalls her life as a young working girl and happy evenings spent dancing at Bullier's, where she first experienced love (Aria: *Ore dolci e divine*). Some of the guests suggest that Prunier should compose a song based on Magda's story but he declares a preference for songs about perverse heroines, such as Berenice or Salome. Prunier demonstrates his skills at palmistry to some of the girls, while Lisette brings in the visitor, Ruggero. He has an introduction from his father for Rambaldo. Prunier reads Magda's palm and tells her that she is like a swallow: she longs for migration towards the sun and true love. Ruggero explains that it is his first visit to Paris and asks where he may find the best place to spend an evening: after much discussion, Lisette recommends Bullier's. Ruggero leaves. Magda chides the other guests for mocking him. After they too have gone, she tells Lisette that she will remain at home that evening. Then, on a whim, she determines to disguise herself and go to Bullier's as well. She goes to get changed. Prunier returns in secret to escort Lisette to Bullier's and flirts extravagantly with her. Lisette is wearing Magda's hat and Prunier tells her that he dislikes it and orders her to take it off. They then set out together. Magda re-enters, disguised as a working girl. She sings a fragment of Prunier's song about Doretta as she leaves, happily anticipating an adventure.

Act 2 Bullier's, Paris

The bar is packed with students, artists and flower girls, singing and dancing. Magda enters and attracts the attention of several young men. She hurries over to a table at which Ruggero is sitting alone. She apologizes for intruding and tells him that she will move away as soon as the young men at the bar stop watching her. Ruggero, who does not recognize Magda in her disguise, asks her to stay. They chat and Ruggero tells Magda that she reminds him of the quiet and elegant girls from his home town, Montauban. They dance happily together. Prunier and Lisette enter, arguing about Prunier's desire to turn Lisette into a lady and to educate her. Magda and Ruggero return to their table and Magda begins to reminisce about a past love affair. Ruggero asks for her name and she answers 'Pauletta'. She writes the name on the tablecloth and Ruggero adds his own beneath. The attraction between Magda and Ruggero grows as they talk. Lisette and Prunier pass their table and Lisette recognizes Magda. Magda signals to Prunier not to give away her secret and Prunier tells Lisette she is mistaken. To prove his point, he introduces Lisette to Magda, who tries to maintain her disguise, to the puzzlement of Lisette. The two couples sit together and drink a toast to love. Prunier notices that Rambaldo has come in, and orders Lisette to take Ruggero out of the room for a few minutes, which she does. Rambaldo demands an explanation from Magda for her behaviour and disguise; she tells him that she has nothing to add to what he has already seen. Rambaldo suggests they leave together but she refuses and declares her love for Ruggero, apologizing for any pain she is causing Rambaldo by her actions. Rambaldo tells her that he cannot prevent her staying with Ruggero. As he leaves, Ruggero returns, and tells Magda that dawn is breaking. They decide to begin a new life together, but Magda secretly worries that she is deceiving Ruggero.

Act 3 The French Riviera

Magda and Ruggero have been living together on the French Riviera for some months. They talk about their first meeting and happiness together, living quietly by the sea. Ruggero tells Magda that he has written to his mother to ask for money to pay their growing debts and for her consent to his marriage to Magda. Ruggero imagines their happy married life and the child they may have (Aria: *Dimmi che vuoi seguirmi*). Magda is deeply touched, but also uneasy: she knows that her past life as a courtesan would make her unacceptable to Ruggero's family, and possibly to Ruggero if he knew who she really was. As Ruggero leaves to post his letter she meditates on her dilemma, torn between her desire to tell Ruggero everything, her wish not to hurt him and her fear of losing his love. Prunier and Lisette arrive. Lisette has had a brief and disastrous career as a music-hall singer: her performance in Nice the previous evening was a catastrophe. She and Prunier bicker with each other while waiting for Magda. When Magda appears, Lisette begs for her job back, and Magda consents. Prunier expresses surprise that Magda can be happy away from Paris, and delivers a message to Magda from Rambaldo: he is happy to take her back on any terms. Magda refuses to listen. Prunier takes his leave of Lisette (first arranging a rendezvous with her for that evening) and Lisette resumes her duties as Magda's maid. Ruggero returns with a letter from his mother, in which she says that if Ruggero's fiancée has all the virtues he has described to her, he will have a blissful marriage. She looks forward to welcoming the couple to her home and sends Magda a kiss. Magda is unable to keep her secret any longer. She tells Ruggero about her past and declares that she can never be his wife – she would cause his parents too much grief. Ruggero

implores Magda not to abandon him (Ma come puoi lasciarmi), but Magda is adamant that they cannot remain together, and that Ruggero must return home. Like a swallow, she flies back to Rambaldo and her old life, leaving Ruggero behind, devastated.

ROSEN AUS FLORIDA or *Roses From Florida* By Leo Fall and Erich Wolfgang Korngold. This operetta is by Leo Fall and Erich Wolfgang Korngold. Fall wrote many operettas between 1902 and his death at 52 in 1925. He was one of the most prominent and successful composers of the Viennese Golden age of operettas.

His Operetta *Roses from Florida* was incomplete when he died and the publishers asked Korngold if he could complete it. The completed work had its premiere in Vienna in February 1929 and went on for 243 performances. Then it disappeared from the repertoire swept up in the general abandonment of all Jewish works in the Nazi era.

The performance tonight comes from the Musical Comedy Theatre in Leipzig in July 2019 and is the only recording that has been made of it.

ROSES FROM FLORIDA

Act 1 Goliath Armstrong is one of America's richest bachelors. He believes that money can buy anything. He has roses flown in from Florida every day. According to an American Indian woman's prophecy, one day these roses will bring him happiness in love. Goliath, however, prefers to go about his jet-set life. Nonetheless, the daughters of American high society are chasing the coveted confirmed bachelor. First and foremost is Dorrit Farring. At a party in the Armstrong household, she manages to put Goliath in a clearly ambiguous situation, whereupon he has to agree to an engagement for better or for worse. Tommy, Armstrong's private secretary "in the most discreet missions", advises Armstrong to engage the Russian Irina as a housekeeper and have her pretend to be his mistress, thus provoking a scandal which will get rid of this involuntary fiancée. Tommy himself has his eye on Dorrit. Goliath pretends to be Mr. Philipps to Irina and tries to put her to the test incognito. In doing so, the two get closer. When Irina confesses to him that she is by no means interested in a rich buffoon like this Mr. Armstrong, Goliath develops a liking for the Russian. So far, everyone was just after his money. Finally, the expected scandal occurs. Irina realizes what game she has gotten herself into. She reveals herself as Princess Naryshkin from a princely family, refuses to give her good reputation to the unknown Mr. Armstrong, and leaves the room in consternation.

Act 2 Irina is in a villa on Palm Beach, which she acquired with the alleged inheritance of a hitherto unknown aunt. In reality, Goliath Armstrong has financed the villa. Everything is in preparation for the big "miss" contest, which is to take place in the villa in the evening. Tommy, who pretends to have been fired by Goliath Armstrong after the scandal, but is actually a double agent in love affairs for his boss, has been made the "guardian of virtue" over the wild horde of beauty queens. However, Tommy crosses erotic limits once or twice, especially with Dorrit. In the meantime, Irina dwells on her memories of Mr. Philipps. As chance would have it, he suddenly stands in front of her. Again, Goliath does not have the heart to admit his true identity in conversation with Irina. He does not want to destroy the tender plant of love for Irina, especially since she is again outraged by Goliath Armstrong's behaviour. Conversely, Tommy is busy trying to keep the stubborn Dorrit away from his boss, who spares no attempts to end up with Armstrong after all. Finally, Dorrit accidentally

reveals Goliath's true identity during the "Miss" pageant that evening. Outraged, Irina throws the rose Goliath gave her to the ground in front of Goliath's feet, and rushes out.

Act 3 Irina and Urusoff, a former Russian prince and alleged friend of her aunt Anastasia, eke out a living in the Parisian bar "Zum lustigen Emigranten". Urusoff would like to get Irina married off as lucratively as possible so that a little money will come in. But since her failure with the wrong Mr. Philipps, Irina is finished with men. And there was no way she would marry a man named Goliath Armstrong, even if she liked him as Mr. Philipps. Fortunately, Chief Diplomat Tommy is not far away. Meanwhile he has been able to convince Dorrit that he might be the better man for her after all, especially since Goliath has promised his secretary the little sum of 10,000 dollars if he manages to get him and Irina back together. Of course, Tommy already has a plan: the fake Mr. Philipps becomes a real Mr. Philipps through adoption. The roses from Florida show their effect after all, Goliath gets his Irina and the eternal bachelor sets anchor in the safe haven of marriage.

Die Königin von Saba (The Queen of Sheba) is an opera in four acts by Karl Goldmark. The German libretto by Hermann Salomon Mosenthal sets a love triangle into the context of the Queen of Sheba's visit to the court of King Solomon, recorded in First Kings 10:1-13 (largely copied in 2 Chronicles 9:1-12). The plot centres on a love triangle not found in the Bible between the Queen of Sheba, Assad (an ambassador at the court of Solomon), and Sulamith (Assad's betrothed).

The website is worth reading : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die_K%C3%B6nigin_von_Saba
The opera was first performed at the Hofoper (now the State Opera) in Vienna, on 10 March 1875. It became Goldmark's most famous opera and subsequent performances have been mounted internationally.

Synopsis

Place and Time: Jerusalem and the surrounding desert, 10th Century BC.

Act 1: A hall in Solomon's palace. Sulamith, the daughter of the High Priest, is anxiously waiting for her fiancé, Assad, to return to court from his diplomatic assignment to plan for the arrival of the Queen of Sheba to the court of King Solomon. The couple are scheduled to marry the following day. Upon his return to the palace, Assad meets with Solomon and reveals to him that he has fallen in love with a mysterious woman among the cedar forests of Lebanon and does not love Sulamith. Before Solomon can reply, the Queen of Sheba arrives with her entourage. As she greets the king, she pulls back her veil, revealing to Assad that she is in fact the mysterious woman he had met on his journey. The queen, however, pretends not to know Assad to his confusion. After the queen leaves, Solomon counsels Assad to not pursue his infatuation but to continue with his marriage to Sulamith.

Act 2: The garden of the palace at night. The Queen of Sheba has slipped away from the social gathering being held in her honour inside the palace. As she reflects on Assad's impending marriage, Astaroth, her slave, informs her that Assad is nearby and then proceeds to lure Assad to her mistress with a seductive oriental vocalise ("Magische Töne"). Assad and the Queen engage in a fervent conversation that climaxes in a passionate duet and embrace. The Guardian of the Temple arrives at daybreak and disrupts their tryst with a call for the Sons of Israel to pray.

The wedding party arrives and Assad and Sulamith are about to be married in front of the Ark of the Covenant when the Queen appears to give a wedding present. The Queen continues to treat Assad like a stranger which throws him into distress. He commits blasphemy by referring to the Queen as his god, causing an uproar which ends the wedding ceremony. Assad is led off to await punishment, most likely his execution.

Act 3: The court of King Solomon. Celebrations in honour of the Queen of Sheba continue with a performance of *Bientanz der Almeen*, a ballet, and a bacchanal. Worried for Assad's fate, the Queen pleads for Solomon to give Assad mercy. He refuses and the Queen leaves plotting revenge. Sulamith, along with her companions, enter the court singing a mournful song. She too pleads for Assad's life to be spared in an aria that eventually culminates into a large ensemble. Still unmoved, Solomon replies with an ominous prophecy about Sulamith's fate. Distraught, she leaves the palace for the desert to bewail her impending future.

Act 4: The vicinity of Sulamith's desert retreat

Assad has been banished by Solomon to the desert. The Queen of Sheba seeks him out to attempt to convince him to come back with her to her kingdom. She finds him alone, not too far from Sulamith's retreat, and tries to seduce him. He rejects her advances and in a bitter soliloquy reveals his regret and desire for a death that might redeem his offense against God. Assad then prays for Sulamith, during which time he is engulfed in a violent sandstorm. He is later found barely alive by Sulamith and her companions. He begs for her forgiveness, which she bestows just before he dies in her arms