

L'Alpino - synopsis in English

L'Alpino is a love story between a couple of young Italians (Enzo, a mountaineer hunter and Nella, a village girl) living in a mountain village situated in Austro-Hungarian territory. This love is heavily opposed by Nella's step-father Franz, a German Tyrolean. He insists that Nella should marry his nephew Andrea, who, like him, is also a German Tyrolean. During that extremely complex period, Enzo, an openly patriotic Italian, is seen as an enemy of his country. Anna Rosa, Nella's mother, tries to convince her husband, without success, not to interfere with Nella's and Enzo's relationship. Franz and Andrea agree to denounce Enzo to the police as an enemy and traitor, in order to get rid of him. Anna Rosa, secretly overhears the conspiracy and warns Enzo, who just has enough time to kiss his beloved goodbye and escape. Enzo will later enrol with the Italian army as an Alpino.

In the second act, in the absence of Enzo, Andrea and Franz try to force Nella to accept Andrea's proposal. Nella rebukes Andrea's strong love advances, both for sentimental reasons since she is already in love with Enzo, but also because of her own strong patriotic feelings that both lovers share in this time of war. One cannot but notice that in this story, the personal feelings of love and those of patriotism are often intertwined with each other and seem to evolve into one aspiration. When Andrea realises he has not succeeded, he angrily swears that if Enzo and Nella would one day be married, the torments he would suffer could only be drowned in blood. Meanwhile, the victorious Italian army arrives to their county and naturally Franz and Andrea have to escape without the women, who decide to remain home to greet the victors. Enzo returns with the army and there are major patriotic celebrations of the Italian victory.

The third act stages the celebrations of the marriage of the loved ones. While people are gathered in the church for the ceremony, Andrea, disguised as a beggar, waits outside, expressing his anger and the vengeance he intends to carry out for having suffered so much pain due to his rebuked love for Nella. As the spouses come out of the church accompanied by the festive congregation, Andrea aims at Enzo with his gun. Nella realises what is happening and covers Enzo in protection. Hit by the shot, she dies in Enzo's arms, surrounded by the shocked crowd. In delirium, she remembers her love for her mother, for Enzo, and for her motherland. The opera ends with the mother's heartbreaking cry "Morta!"