

Tessmer, ten., Habich, bar., LSO, Heger); Da lieg auch du, dunkler Wurm!...Gönntest du mir wohl ein gut Gesell?...Hei! Siegfried erschlug nun den schlimmen Zwerg! (May 22 & 17, 1929, Melchior, ten., Nora Gruhn, sop., LSO, Coates); **Act III: Prelude...Wache, Wala...Stark ruft das Lied...Dir Unweisen ruf ich ins Ohr** (1928, Emil Schipper, bar., VSOO, Alwin); Kennstest du mich, kühner Spross...Zich hin!...Siegfried mounts the rocky height (May 22, 1929, Melchior, ten., Rudolf Bockelmann, bar., LSO, Coates); Selige Öde auf sonniger Höh'!...Das ist kein Mann! (May 12, 1930, Melchior, ten., LSO, Heger); Heil dir, Sonne!...O Siegfried! Siegfried!...Ewig war ich...Dich lieb ich...Ob jetzt ich dein? (May 29, 1932, Florence Easton, sop., Melchior, ten., OROHCG, Heger)

Volume IV: Götterdämmerung:

Prologue: Welch Licht leuchtet dort? (Oct. 17, 1928 & Jan. 3, 1929, Noel Eadie, sop., Evelyn Arden, sop., Gladys Palmer, con., LSO, Coates); Dawn...Zu neuen Taten...Siegfried's Rhine Journey (Jan. 26, 1926 and Oct. 18, 1928, Austral, sop., Widdop, ten., SO and LSO, Coates); **Act I: Begrüßefroh, o Held** (Oct. 10, 1928, Fear, bar., Widdop, ten., Frederic Collier, bass, Ljungberg, sop., LSO, Coates); Hier sitz ich zur Wacht (Feb. 17, 1928, Ivar Andréson, bass, BSOO, Blech); Seit er von dir geschieden (Aug. 23 & Oct. 25, 1927, Feb. 16, 1928, Maartje Offers, con., Austral, sop., LSO, Coates); **Act II: Hoiho! Hoihohoho!** (June

21, 1928, BSOO & Chorus, Blech); Helle wehr! (Oct. 17, 1928, Widdop, ten., Austral, sop., LSO, Coates); Welches Unholds List (Oct. 18, 1928, Austral, sop., Collier, bass, Fear, bar., LSO, Coates); **Act III: Frau Sonne sendet lichte Strahlen** (Sept. 1928, Laubenthal, ten., Tilly De Garmo, sop., Lydia Kindermann, sop., Elfriede Marherr, con., BSOO, Blech); Mime heiss ein mürrischer Zwerg...Brünnhilde, heilige Braut! (Sept. 1928, Laubenthal, ten., Desider Zador, bar., Emmanuel List, bass, BSOO & Chorus, Blech); Siegfried's Funeral Music (Jan. 26 and Mar. 26, 1926, LSO, Coates); Schweight eures Jammers...Starke Scheite schichtet mir dort (1927, Austral, sop., LSO, Collingwood); Sein ross führet daher...Finale (Aug. 25 & 26, 1927, Oct. 25, 1927, Austral, sop., LSO, Coates)

2. Darrell, R.D. *The Gramophone Shop Encyclopedia of Recorded Music*. (New York, NY: The Gramophone Shop, 1936).
3. Culshaw, John. *Ring Resounding*, Pp. 7-8. (New York, NY: Viking Press, 1967).
4. Dymment, Christopher. "Albert Coates Discography" in *Recorded Sound*, Nos. 57 and 58, January and April 1975.
5. Dymment.
6. Darrell and Culshaw.
7. Dymment.

Bellini: La Sonnambula. Joan Sutherland (Amina); Eileen di Tullio (Lisa); Betty Allen (Teresa); Renato Cioni (Elvino); Armand McLane (Alessio); Leo Goeke (Notary); Ezio Flagello (Rodolfo); American Opera Society Chorus & Orchestra; conducted by Nicola Rescigno.

Bellini: I Puritani. Excerpts. Joan Sutherland (Elvira); Nicola Filacurdi (Arturo); Ernest Blanc (Riccardo); Giuseppe Modesti (Giorgio); Edinburgh Festival; conducted by Vittorio Gui. Standing Room Only SRO 841-2 (2 CDs) distributed by Lyric.

Bellini: *I Puritani*. Joan Sutherland (Elvira); Betty Allen (Enrichetta); Nicolai Gedda (Arturo); Ernest Blanc (Riccardo); Justino Diaz (Giorgio); Raymond Michalski (Walton); American Opera Society Chorus & Orchestra (at Philadelphia); conducted by Richard Bonyngé. Standing Room Only SRO 838-2 (2 CDs) distributed by Lyric.

These two releases document the formative years of Joan Sutherland's approach to Bellini, however both were recorded in concert which may help make it easier for the singers to cope with the difficult vocal writing but does not always help them convey the drama. This December 5, 1960 performance is the earliest *La Sonnambula* with Sutherland to make its way to disc. There is a tape of a performance at Covent Garden the previous season circulating among collectors. It follows the common practice of the time by removing about 30 minutes or 20% of Bellini's score. These cuts include Lisa's second act aria, the second half of the following quartet, one verse of Lisa's first act aria, and no cabaletta or choral movement is left untouched. Even the short choral finale after "Ah non giunge" is removed, a practice repeated in Sutherland's second commercial recording but not in her earlier one. Lest we think these are the whims of Sutherland (or Bonyngé) and Rescigno, we must remember that these are the same exclusions sanctioned by Maria Callas in most of her performances. Only in Callas' performances with Leonard Bernstein at LaScala do we hear a fuller edition of the score from her. When Sutherland sang the opera at the Metropolitan Opera two years later, a fuller edition of the score was used and the musical balance of several numbers was restored.

Most interest will center on the performance of Sutherland as Amina. Vocally it does not vary significantly from her first recording for London Records or from the live performance issued by the Metropolitan Opera from 1963. There is a slight memory lapse in the first act cabaletta otherwise everything is in place. The fioratura is clean and accurate with high Ds and E-flats flawlessly placed. If I had to choose among these three early Sutherland performances, I would lean toward the Metropolitan Opera broadcast because of the fuller edition of the text and superiority of Nicolai Gedda as Elvino over Cioni and Monti. Only Valletti with Callas at LaScala and Pavarotti come close to Gedda's accomplishment. In the present performance, Renato Cioni is competent; there is some simplification of the high lying phrases and the traditional exchange of lines with the soprano in their second duet. Cioni shows good intentions in following the dynamics and phrasing, but he does not have elegance of Gedda who was in his prime in 1963. Pavarotti in the later Sutherland recording is too forceful at times but on records he is the only tenor who is able to match Gedda's command of the high tessitura. Ezio Flagello is perfectly acceptable as Rodolfo but without the smooth line one recalls in the recordings of the aria by Pinza, Plancon or Siepi. The remainder of the cast is acceptable, but Betty Allen continues the long-running tradition of singing full voice to quiet the chorus when Amina is sleeping.

The sound is acceptable for a non-broadcast document and the balances are true to life which means the orchestra may be too loud for listeners interested primarily in the voices. There are 36 tracks which allows easy access to favorite sections of the score. If I were forced to live with only one recording of this work and finances were no object, it would be the Metropolitan Opera set with the second London recording as my second choice. I place the Callas/Bernstein performance from LaScala in 1955 at this same level except for the muddy sonics.

Collectors beware that several issues of this performance are mismatched.

The second disc is filled out with five scenes from *I Puritani* from Edinburgh in 1960. Sutherland is in glorious voice. Filicuridi shouts but proves discretion is the better part of valor by simply omitting the high Ds in the love duet. There is not enough of the opera here to give a true indication of the whole performance but it is interesting to hear Sutherland's early ideas of a role she continued to sing for over twenty-five years. The packaging is minimal, that is to say, there are laudatory notes about the performers, no synopsis, and no libretto or translation for either set under review.

This leads to the second recording, a complete performance of *I Puritani* taped in Philadelphia in 1963. This performance came between two performances at Carnegie Hall in New York with the same cast. Having lived with this performance in one format or another for over twenty years, it remains one of the best performances of any Bellini opera that I have heard. The performance includes most of the standard cuts but there is not the wholesale slashing which affects some performances. Also, everything is in the original keys, a practice more honored in the breach during this period. The primary reason for this is the superb Arturo of Nicolai Gedda. The C-sharp in his entrance aria and the Ds in the third act duet are thrilling sounds and still beautiful to the ear (some of our current high-flying tenors should remember that a beautiful sound was once taken for granted). Gedda does not attempt the high F in the Act three finale, but his handling of this difficult scene is very compelling. Ernest Blanc sings Riccardo in a lyric manner. These performances marked Justino Diaz's first important engagement; his Metropolitan Opera debut took place the following October. He sings the role of Giorgio very well but he hardly sounds old enough to be Sutherland's uncle. Blanc and Diaz match each other point for point in a rousing performance of "Suoni la tromba".

Joan Sutherland is in spectacular voice. Of course, the agility and top notes are spectacular, but more astounding is hearing her take command of the first act finale. It is traditional for the soprano to double the violin melody at this point rising to a high D at the climax. Usually the feeling is one of the soprano going along for the ride on the lovely string sound. Sutherland's commanding upper extension allows her to be the leader and it is exhilarating to hear her voice dominating the entire ensemble without any sense of strain or the aid of a separate microphone. The performance includes the final aria written for Maria Malibran for a revised version of the opera to be sung at Naples. Although this aria is regularly included today, this series of performances marked the first time that the music was heard in the United States.

The rest of the cast as well as the chorus and orchestra are very able if not spectacular. The conducting of Richard Bonyngue is more propulsive than he was on the London recording from the same period. The sound is quite good for an in-house recording at this time. However, some listeners will be put off by the inclusion of so much applause, three tracks are devoted entirely to applause including a 5 1/2 minute ovation after the Act Three Love Duet (it is certainly warranted). But even more intrusive are the comments from our unknown recorder telling us how great a performance we are hearing. If these remarks were made to a fellow audience member it might be tolerable, but these comments seem to be aimed at the tape.

Which recordings of *I Puritani* do you need? The Callas recording because of the unique way of approaching operas of this period, the second London recording with Sutherland and Pavarotti because it allows us to hear more of the score than any other performance including an unpublished passage in Act 3. But for years whenever I have just wanted to enjoy *I Puritani* this Sutherland and Gedda performance is the one that I have pulled off the shelf. Despite the performance cuts, it still remains my favorite. *Reviewed by Richard LeSueur.*

Gounod: *Faust*. Victoria de los Angeles (Marguerite); Cecilia Ward (Siebel); Maria Mayhoff (Marthe); Richard Tucker (Faust); Henri Noel (Valentin), Nicola Moscona (Mephistofeles); Don Bernard (Wagner); New Orleans Opera Chorus & Orchestra; conducted by Walter Herbert. Legato Classics LCD 167-2 (2 CDs) distributed by Legato.

Gounod: *Faust*. Renata Scotto (Marguerite); Milena dal Piva (Siebel); Anna di Stasio (Marthe); Alfredo Kraus (Faust); Lorenzo Saccomani (Valentin); Nicolai Ghiaurov (Mephistofeles); Guido Mazzini (Wagner); Tokyo Opera Chorus and Orchestra; conducted by Paul Ethuin. **Massenet: *Manon*.** Three duets. Renata Scotto (Manon); Alfredo Kraus (Des Grieux); Lyric Opera of Chicago; conducted by Julius Rudel. Standing Room Only SRO 811-3 (3 CDs) distributed by Lyric.

I yield to no one in my respect for the Marguerite of Victoria de los Angeles, but the only reason for anyone to acquire the first recording is to document the Faust of Richard Tucker as heard in New Orleans in 1953. De los Angeles is better served on her two commercial recordings. This is the only Faust of Richard Tucker preserved so it is of some interest but the role was not central to his repertoire. The traditional cuts are made, the sound is poor, the other roles are not well performed, and the chorus and orchestra are simply not acceptable. The performance of the Soldier's Chorus may be become a party item in some sadistic circles.

In contrast, the 1973 performance given by members of the LaScala company on tour in Tokyo is an excellent addition to the catalog. The Marguerite of Renata Scotto shows a more resolute persona than we usually hear in the role. Although there is some stridency in the upper range, Scotto is in full command of the role. Her French, while not faultless, is better than we hear from most Italian sopranos. Alfredo Kraus is an excellent Faust. This has always been one of his best roles and it is only just that this performance has been preserved on disc here since he did not record the role commercially. Nicolai Ghiaurov has recorded Mephistofeles twice and this performance dates between them. It is a generic approach to the role which works very well but brings no new insights. Lorenzo Saccomani as Valentin experiences some difficulty with the high tessitura; it is unfortunate that Leonard Warren's Valentin has not yet made available to the general public. The other roles are adequately, but not spectacularly handled.

This is a relatively complete edition of the opera. Marguerite loses her "Spinning song" in Act 4 and there are some cuts in the ballet music. This issue can not match the best of the commercial recordings, but as a souvenir of Scotto or Kraus it is very fine.

The third disc is filled out by three duets from *Manon* by Massenet with