

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with Sutherland and Pavarotti because it allows us to hear more of the score than any other performance including an unpublished passage in Act 3.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

Renata Scotto and Alfredo Kraus is from a 1983 Lyric Opera of Chicago broadcast. Scotto and Kraus are in good voice and the sound is quite good.

The packaging is minimal, that is to say laudatory notes about the performers, no synopsis, no libretto or translation for either set under review. *Reviewed by Richard LeSueur.*

***The Beatles: The Complete Discography. Parlophone, EMI***

***Please Please Me.*** Parlophone, EMI, C2-46435. CD, recorded 1963.

***With The Beatles.*** Parlophone, EMI, C2-46436. CD, recorded 1963.

***A Hard Day's Night.*** Parlophone, EMI, CDP7-464372. CD, recorded 1964.

***Beatles For Sale.*** Parlophone, EMI, C2-07777-4643825. CD, recorded 1964.

***Help.*** Parlophone, EMI, C2-46439. CD, recorded 1965.

***Rubber Soul.*** Parlophone, EMI, C2-46440. CD, recorded 1965.

***Revolver.*** Parlophone, EMI, C2-46441. CD, recorded 1966.

***Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band.*** Parlophone, EMI, C2-07777-46442-28 (1987). CD, recorded 1967.

***Magical Mystery Tour.*** Parlophone, EMI, C2-07777-48067220 (1987). CD, recorded 1967.

***The Beatles.*** (White Album). Parlophone, EMI, C2-46443. 2 CDs, recorded 1968.

***Yellow Submarine.*** Parlophone, EMI, C2-46445 (1969). CD, recorded 1968.

***Abbey Road.*** Parlophone, EMI, C2-07777-4644624 (1987). CD, recorded 1969.

***Let It Be.*** Parlophone, EMI, C2-46446 (1970). CD, recorded 1969.

This 1987 collection, consisting of CD reissues of U.K. original recordings, is the only one that faithfully reflects the Beatles recorded output. In North America, Capitol Records sometimes distorted the true nature of certain albums. For example, Capitol took songs from different recording sessions, songs that were not artistically meant to be put on the same album, and mixed them together to make a new product. It even dropped two or three songs of each original British album in order to stretch the material into more albums. On the ***Revolver*** album, Capitol cut two of John Lennon's songs, thus artificially decreasing his input, and disturbing the album's equilibrium. Obviously, this is not what the Beatles intended, and it affects the coherence of their work.

These reissues are packaged much in the same way the original U.K. albums were. Each is accompanied by a small booklet containing technical data, photographs, and instrumentation details (e.g., instruments used in the recordings, and who plays them). Efforts could have been made to produce lengthier booklets with musical and historical comments on these landmark recordings. However, EMI invested in the sound quality. All CDs have a superb sound with minimal alteration; there is no distortion when played at high volume. The ADD (analog) tape recorder used during session recording, and digital tape recorder used during subsequent mixing and/or editing and during mastering or transcription recording, works well. These recordings are warmly recommended.

Here is some information that is unfortunately missing from those accompanying booklets. The group was formed in Liverpool in the late 50s by John Lennon (rhythm guitar); Paul McCartney (bass); George Harrison (lead guitar); and Ringo Starr (drums). After laboring several years in the tough club scene of their hometown and in Hamburg, Germany (both major European seaports filled