SYMPOSIUM RECORDS CD 1073

The Harold Wayne Collection – Volume 3

FRANCESCO MARCONI (1853-1916) Among the greatest historical figures enshrined by the gramophone the name of Francesco ('Checco') Marconi ranks highly, for here we have a tenor who learned his craft in the 1870s and earned his place among the select few - Gayarre, Masini, Stagno, and Tamagno - whose names were then household names. After studies with Bartolini and some appearances in theatres of the second rank, such as the Pagliano of Florence, where he sang in Boito's *Mefistofele* in 1876, he appeared at the Teatro Real, Madrid, in 1878, as Gounod's Faust. In rapid succession he was heard at Milan, Rome, St. Petersburg, Buenos Aires, London, Naples, Barcelona and Paris. In Russia, especially, he enjoyed a vogue which bordered on fanaticism. His repertoire expanded to embrace *I Puritani*, *Lucrezia Borgia*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *La Sonnambula*, and *Les Huguenots*, as well as *Carmen*, *Rigoletto*, and *La Gioconda*. With several other of his great tenor contemporaries he was a notable Lohengrin. To these works he brought the beauty of a tenor voice which, by common consent, was one of the finest of his time and which J.H. Duval described as 'a voice of silver, a perfect free-flowing stream of silver throughout, [which] seemed limitless on the extreme upper notes.' Others wrote of his ample, extended, ringing voice, of absolutely golden timbre; it was sweet and malleable, sustaining a splendid legato and flexing itself effortlessly in graceful phrases. As De Schauensee has put it: 'His voice had a shining enamel, the ringing, high-placed upper notes characteristic of the pre-verismo tenors.' He had eloquence, ardour, and dash. Almost wherever he went he was acclaimed: one notable exception, and almost certainly the greatest disaster of his career, was when, at New York's Academy of Music in 1888, he essayed Verdi's Otello, a part which was quite unsuited to his lyric tenor. He amassed a considerable fortune and with it a gracious house in his native Rome, where he died in 1916.

By 1903 when, at the age of fifty, he made his first records, Marconi had already been in decline for a decade, with a well-documented history of vocal problems. Nevertheless, both these and his 1907-8 series make fascinating listening and will repay close attention: though the breathing is unpredictable, the intonation sometimes uncertain, and the voice is no longer fresh, many of these pieces show a style which is near-irreproachable. In the less-taxing passages we detect the beauty of voice for which he was so often praised: the opening bars of 'O mia mimosa' and the final pianissimo of 'Non guardarmi così' are ravishing. The flexibility, too, is unimpaired, especially in Denza's 'In questa sera' and Mascagni's 'Bella cantiam l'amore'; not for him the aspirate as a routine method of reaching one note from another on the same syllable. The

diction is exemplary: from these old records we might well write down the complete texts of the pieces. Enchanting and delicate touches are to be found in every one of the five titles included here.
With the exception of those few titles which were reissued in, for example, the HMV 'Archive Series', Marconi's records are rare and much sought-after. The transcendent rarity of, for example, the 'Bella cantiam' with (according to the label) Mascagni at the piano) and 'Non guardarmi cosi' makes it unlikely that collectors can ever hope to hear them in better sound than from these copies.
The remaining 22 of the 27 known titles appear on another CompactDisc (*The Harold Wayne Collection*, Vol. 2, Symposium 1069) devoted entirely to this tenor.

ANGELICA PANDOLFINI (1871-1959) was a daughter of Francesco Pandolfini (1836-1916), the Amonasro of the first performance (1872) of Aida in Italy, and sister of the operatic tenor and singing teacher Franco Pandolfini. After studies with Massart in Paris she made her début at the Teatro Comunale, Modena, in February 1894, in Gounod's *Faust*. The following winter she sang at the Royal Opera, Malta, where she appeared as Santuzza, Nedda, and Puccini's Manon. Returning to Italy, she took up the role of Mimi in Puccini's *La Bohème*, in which she was to become even more celebrated than the creator, Cesira Ferrani, whom - according to no less an authority than Giulio Ricordi - she greatly surpassed. On March 15th 1897 she sang Mimi in the first La Scala performance of *La Bohème*. Her subsequent repertoire embraced Massenet's *Sapho*, *Werther*, *La Traviata*, *Falstaff*, *Meistersinger* (in Italian), *Iris*, *Tosca*, *Fedora*, *Le Maschere*, *Otello*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Mefistofele*, *Marcella*, *Gloria*, and *Figlia di Jorio*. On November 6th 1902, in the company of Caruso and De Luca, she created the part of Adriana in the world première of Cilea's *Adriana Lecouvreur*. In 1909 she married and retired from the stage.
Among record collectors the name of Pandolfini lives today principally through the surpassing rarity - unfortunate in the light of her short but important career - and desirability of her five red G&T records, dating from 1903. It is a rarity such that the detailed history of every known copy goes back many years. Few collectors can hope to see one of her records, still less own one. But, while many highly-prized records may owe their scarcity to a refusal by a discriminating public to lay out what was, early in the 20th century, a considerable sum for a dubious souvenir of some ageing singer, no such reason can be adduced in the present case. All her known records are attractive on purely vocal grounds. Rumour has it that, for some unknown reason, she became dissatisfied with them and had both matrices and unsold stocks destroyed. Oddly, the diva seemed to have only vague recollections of her records; her nephew related to the writer that, to her family, she always maintained that they had been made in Lisbon, raising at least the possibility of the existence of further titles. Of the three

included here, her singing of the aria in *Adriana Lecouvreur* is meltingly beautiful; in Godard's 'Chanson de Florian' her delicate treatment well illustrates the evenness of her diminuendo and the mellowness of her chest notes.

FEMANDO VALERO (1854 or 1852-1914) Fernando Valero's training with Vidal, the former teacher of Julián Gayarre is perhaps the reason for the tenor's nickname of 'the little Gayarre.' Other sources variously attribute his training to Salazar, to the celebrated tenor Enrico Tamberlick, to Manuel Garcia, and to Mario. His début was in 1878, at the Teatro Real of Madrid, as Lorenzo in Auber's *Fra Diavolo.* From 1880 he sang in the Italian provinces and in secondary theatres before, in 1883, appearing at La Scala, Milan, making his début as Gounod's Faust. In 1885 his horizons expanded to the Imperial Opera of St. Petersburg, and in 1890 to the Royal Italian Opera at Covent Garden, where he sang Don José, Nadir, and the Duke of Mantua. In 1890 he appeared in the first performances of *Cavalleria Rusticana* in Florence and Palermo. In January 1891 he returned to La Scala, to create Turiddu in that theatre's premiere of *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and in December 1891 to create it at New York's Metropolitan Opera House, to the Santuzza of Emma Eames. After 1897 his career was interrupted by illness. In 1902 he opened a singing school in St. Petersburg. This reissue presents three of Valero's four known records. Though Scuderi's 'Dormi pure' is not, perhaps, the repertoire with which we most readily associate him, this is a charming record which well demonstrates his vocal flexibility. We are fortunate to have two glimpses of his Turiddu, where, especially in the 'Siciliana' (with its customary semitone transposition to E minor), his open-throated method and exuberant flourishes admirably suggest the passion of the Sicilian peasant.

EUGENIO GIRALDONI (1871-1924) was another singer to spring from an illustrious musical background. His father was the renowned baritone Leone Giraldoni (1826-1897) and his mother Carolina Ferni was a singer accomplished enough to have been the first Italian Selika in *L 'Africaine*, and sister of the celebrated violinist Virginia Ferni. After study with his father the young Eugenio made his début at Barcelona, in *Carmen*, before passing to the major theatres of Europe and the Americas. At Buenos Aires he created the baritone role in the first Argentinian performance of Franchetti's *Cristoforo Colombo*, and at Milan the part of Lazzaro in *Figlia di Jorio*, but posterity will certainly best remember him for his creation of the part of Scarpia in the world première of Tosca at Rome in 1900, alongside Darclée and de Marchi. His repertoire included *Andrea Chénier, Madama Butterfly, Louise, Guglielmo Tell, Linda di Chamounix, La Gioconda, Hamlet, La Damnation de Faust, Boris Godounov* (in French), *Die Meistersinger, Lohengrin*, and *Der Rosenkavalier.* In these and other roles it was his 'truly superior artistic intelligence' which impressed as

much as his vocal prowess.
All of Giraldoni's records are rare, but the six G&T records of 1902 are exceptionally scarce. Though the 'Notturno' from *Cristoforo Colombo* (according to the label, recorded here 'under the personal supervision of the composer') is historically important it is as Rubinstein's Demon - less sinister and insinuating than Battistini's characterisation - that we gain the impression of the authority of his stage performances. We cannot agree with the description (Scott) of his recording of the 'Death of Rodrigo' from *Don Carlos* as 'sung in a monotonous mezza forte', for it displays many dynamic nuances and also the splendidly finished trill which was within the capabilities of so many male singers a century ago.

GIOVANNI ZENATELLO (1876-1949) studied with Zannoni and Moretti. He began his vocal career as a baritone, but soon assumed tenor roles. His career was long, wide-ranging - both artistically and geographically - and highly successful. His repertoire embraced *Aïda*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *La Bohème*, *Carmen*, *Faust*, *Germania*, *La Gioconda*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Manon*, *Pagliacci*, *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, and *Il Trovatore*. He was the first tenor interpreter of *Figlia di Jorio* (Franchetti), *Madama Butterfly*, *Gloria* (Cilea) and *Siberia* (Giordano), but it was as Verdi's Otello that he made history, having (it is said) sung the part more than five hundred times.

Zenatello's records for Columbia, Fonotipia, Edison, and Victor are moderately accessible. Virtually unknown, however, is the group of black G&Ts, made in Milan in 1903. In these records we hear (despite some speed variations in the originals) from the twenty seven-year-old tenor what Hurst has described as 's voice of trumpet-like quality', exactly suited to the eager, youthful exuberance of Andrea Chénier; though lacking the control of his more mature years he reaches with insouciant ease the high C of the climax of 'Salve! Dimora casta e pura.'

GEMMA BELLINCIONI (1864-1950) 'Of all the sopranos who identified their careers with the new repertory [verismo], none was more famous in her life-time, or more important historically than Gemma Bellincioni.' So runs Scott's introduction (*The Record of Singing. To 1914*, p. 147) to his discussion of this singer, and we can only concur in his summary of one of the greatest singing actresses of whom the gramophone has preserved a glimpse.

Born in Monza on August 17th or 19th 1864, Bellincioni's background was musical; her father was the bass Cesare Bellincioni and her mother the contralto Carlotta Savoldini. Her dramatic gifts made an early appearance: when not accompanying her parents on their artistic tours she was, at the age of four, already imitating the moves and gestures of the ballerinas whom she saw on balconies around their house. She first sang in public when, aged six, she appeared in her father's

benefit concert in Trieste. Richards (*Record Collector*, Vol. XVI, Nos. 9-10, 1966), quoting Celletti, gives her official début as taking place in *Il Segreto della Duchessa* by Dell'Orefice (Naples, May 1879); Schmidl specifies, however, that the work was Pedrotti's *Tutti in Maschera* on November 10th 1880, and this is corroborated by the soprano who, in her memoirs states that she was then 'sixteen years and three months old.' Her early career was as a coloratura soprano, singing such roles in *Un Ballo in Maschera* (Oscar), *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Linda di Chamounix*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *I Puritani*, *La Sonnambula*, and *L'Etoile du Nord*; she also sang in *L'Africaine* (Inez), *Le Prophète* (Berta), *Robert le Diable* (Isabella), and *Les Huguenots* (Queen). A tour of Spain and Portugal with the Enrico Tamberlick company brought appearances there with luminaries of the stature of Gayarre, and also her first Violetta in *La Traviata*, a part which she repeated at the Teatro Comunale of Bologna in October 1885. Following the spring season of 1886 at La Scala, Milan (*Robert le Diable*) she joined the Ferrari company for her first tour to South America; the troupe also included the Sicilian tenor Roberto Stagno, whose companion (they did not marry) she thereafter remained until his death in 1897. Together they triumphed in the world première of *Cavalleria Rusticana* at Rome in May 1890; some of the drama lingers in the several photographs of them as Santuzza and Turiddu. In 1892 they created parts in the world première of Giordano's *Mala Vita*; in a peripatetic life they did much to popularise Mascagni's *L'Amico Fritz* and other works of the so-called New Italian School. Giordano wrote for them the principal parts in *Fedora*, but Stagno's death left Bellincioni to create the role with the young Caruso as her Loris. She was acclaimed by audiences all over Europe in roles as diverse as Carmen and Elsa, Norina and Salome, gradually replacing the lyric parts by the dramatic. She created roles in numerous other operas by composers famous or obscure. In addition to the more usual breeches parts she sometimes appeared in male guise in parts such as Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Such was her life until 1911, when she retired from the stage and dedicated herself, in Berlin, to the teaching of singing. During the Great War she taught singing in Rome; later, she taught various aspects of musical and dramatic art in Vienna, Siena, and Naples, where she died in April 1950.
Her four red G&T records (all included here) of 1903 and her ten Pathé records of a year or so later (and some fragments of film??) are all that remains to bring her to life today. In the former, when she was only about forty years old, the ravages of a career which had already lasted almost a quarter-century are evident. The closing bars of the *Mefistofele* piece - in which she dispels the theory that singers with vibrato cannot trill - remind us that she had once been a coloratura soprano. But the voice, which was never large, is now used in a dramatic fashion which her characteristic vibrato does much to accentuate. Her record of 'Ah' fors'e lui' indicates why Verdi so much admired her Violetta; for all the vocal wear and

uncertain intonation, we are fascinated by the intense feeling in her treatment of the phrase 'A quell'amor. . . ch'è palpito dell'universo'. In the fragments of her Santuzza and Fedora we have, in the authority of their creator, irreplaceable links with the 1890s.
Though it seems all too true that the aura of Gemma Bellincioni came essentially through a temperament which the early gramophone was unable to capture, her records preserve sufficient of her personality to persuade us of her strong magnetism. Would that there had been more of them!

FIORELLO GIRAUD (1868 or 1871-1928), son of the tenor Lodovico Giraud (1846-1882), studied at the Conservatory of his native Parma. The fact that his début, in *Lohengrin* at Vercelli, took place in 1891 suggests that, of the alternative birth dates, 1868 rather than 1871 is correct. He was acclaimed for the correctness of his schooling, his finesse, and his splendid high notes, and his progress was rapid. In 1892 came his moment of enduring fame when, with Stehle, Maurel, Daddi, and Ancona he sang in the world première of Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci.* Subsequently he sang at Barcelona, Lisbon, Santiago (Chile), Trieste (world première of Tomasini's *Medea*), and Palermo. At La Scala he sang Pelleas in the Italian première of Debussy's opera.
The Giraud title included here was still unknown when Bauer and his co-workers compiled their catalogue. It displays the dark, virile tenor voice, with enough vibrato to give it character, of a man whom, we might have thought, was still young enough to manage the more usual high B flat, rather than A flat, in the final bars.
The remaining seven known Giraud G&T records will appear on a forthcoming compact disc (The Harold Wayne Collection, Vol. IV, Symposium Records 1077).

Michael E. Henstock July 1989

Dr. Wayne writes:
To Michael Henstock's notes I am happy to add some comments, based on my own collecting experience, on the relative rarity of the original discs which I have been privileged to re-record with Symposium Records.
Marconi: Comments on the Marconi records are more properly reserved for the notes which accompany the compact disc devoted to this tenor (Symposium CD 1069).

PANDOLFINI: My present copy of Pandolfini's *Adriana Lecouvreur* recording was previously owned by the well-known London collector and dealer the late Ronald Phillips. Another copy, obtained from the

Mastrangelo Collection (M.J. Prospect) of New York in 1966, I passed on to the late Anthony Westbrook. The 'Chanson de Florian' now in my collection brings back memories of a cold, foggy Northern Italian day (October 13th 1961) when I travelled with the late Roberto Bauer along the (then) precipitous road to Genoa to share the important collection of the doyen of Italian collectors Sig. Montecucco. Roberto kept three very scarce Ancona 1904 Red G&Ts and the Pandolfini 'Chanson de Florian'. A measure of the rarity of this last is the remarkable fact that, despite his many years of collecting during the pre- and immediate post-war years, this was his first Pandolfini. When, in 1968, he died it came to me. Another superb copy of the 'Florian' came from the collection of a prince among collectors, my close friend Dr. Dick Alexander. One copy subsequently went to Yale University, along with an extraordinarily rare Emma Baumann 7" Berliner and Signoretti's *Ernani* piece. I know of no other copy of Pandolfini's record from *Il Nozze di Figaro*; this one arrived at my door by personal courier from South America What a day!

VALERO: I have found two excellent copies of Valero's 'Dormi pure' and one each of his two *Cavalleria Rusticana* items. Their rarity in Great Britain has always surprised me since they were London recordings.,

GIRALDONI: These marvellous G&Ts are top rare. The *Aïda* is perhaps the least difficult, followed by the *Don Carlos* (a real beauty) and the *Demone* undoubtedly the most elusive of a very scarce series.

ZENATELLO: I agree wholeheartedly with Michael Henstock that the G&Ts are virtually unknown. Poor sales would be a plausible explanation by virtue of the difficulty in playing them, since the two groups were recorded at very slow speeds.
Many years ago my friend and mentor Jack Freestone told me of an unknown and unpublished Zenatello G&T, possibly matrix 3119, on an island in the Mediterranean. I went there and searched high and low, only to find that the erstwhile owner of the disc had parted with his whole collection: although he broadcast every week on the single radio station network on the island his recordings of great singers now came from tapes!

BELLINCIONI: Of the four, the *Traviata* item is surely the least difficult to find and is usually in not too-worn a condition, whereas 'L'altra notte' from *Mefistofele* has consistently appeared in worn state. Strangely enough, I have seen only two copies of the *Cavalleria Rusticana* aria and the *Fedora* in four or five copies over the years, the latter in every instance having been in rather fine state of preservation. The vibrancy of Bellincioni's tones seems to me to be a prerequisite of a great verismo soprano.

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The recording dates are those given in Alan Kelly's invaluable book: *His Master's Voice/La Voce del Padrone: The Italian Catalague*, (Greenwood Press, 1988), which has established many dates much more closely than has previously been possible.

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