

# *SYMPOSIUM RECORDS CD 1113*

## The HAROLD WAYNE Collection – Volume 13

### FONOTIPIA – The 13¾ inch (35cm) Records

The Gramophone & Typewriter Company was responsible for the first celebrity records, which were widely distributed in 1902, although for a brief period a potential rival in Europe was the International Zonophone Company. By 1904 however, the Gramophone & Typewriter Company had taken over the rival concern and for a time had a virtual monopoly of the celebrity market. Then, at the end of 1904, a new company, the Societa Italiana di Fonotipia, was launched. The board of directors was very impressive. It included Duke Umberto Visconti di Modrone, president of La Scala; Harry Vincent Higgins, director of Covent Garden's Grand Opera Syndicate; Tito Ricordi, the music publisher; and a banker and minor composer, Baron Frederic d'Erlanger. The managing director was Alfred Michaelis, who had previously been the Italian agent for the Gramophone & Typewriter Company, while Umberto Giordano, the celebrated composer was appointed artistic director. The aim of the new company was to issue primarily classical operatic and vocal records performed by artists of international repute. They soon acquired the services of many outstanding celebrities, including Victor Maurel, Alessandro Bonci, Maria Barrientos, Giovanni Zenatello, Giuseppe de Luca and Mario Sammarco. The first records issued were 10¾" (27cm) in diameter and were single sided, but shortly afterwards they appeared in double sided form.

A branch was opened in Paris. Rose Caron, Ernest van Dyck, Victor Capoul and Pedro Gailhard were among the famous artists recorded there. A small number of records were also made in Berlin.

It was also decided to produce some discs of 13¾" (35cm) diameter, which increased the playing time considerably, thus enabling the artists to relax and phrase more freely.

The company hoped to inaugurate this series with a tremendous boost to prestige by releasing records of the great Polish tenor, Jean de Reszke. It is thought that he was persuaded to record two titles on April 22nd 1905, but these were never released. It is generally accepted that he was dissatisfied with the recordings and, according to common belief, insisted upon the masters being destroyed in his presence. [That de Reszke did actually enter a studio is proved by a piano accompaniment credited to him on a record of Marie de Reszke. This is reproduced on Symposium CD 1172. - Editor]

However, although de Reszke's records never materialized, the technical standard of the early Italian Fonotipias was superb, with the voices very forward and generally smoothly reproduced. This applies especially to the 13¾" discs which Dr. Wayne possesses and which are now available in this latest Symposium

album. The originals are amazingly rare for three main reasons. Their large size made them rather unwieldy and fragile, and many collectors found them difficult to store. Secondly, most of the early gramophones were unable to play them as the distance between the central pin and the tone arm mounting was insufficient, and thirdly they were very expensive.

The single example of a 13¾" Odeon records raises a query which I cannot answer. Was this a unique specimen issued as a sort of trial run for subsequent discs of similar size? It is certainly the first Odeon of this diameter that I have met in sixty years of collecting. It is well recorded and luckily in an excellent state of preservation!

[Since this was written an Odeon catalogue has been seen with 13¾" (35cm) orchestral recordings. – Editor]

GIUSEPPE ARMANINI (1874 - 1915) was born in Milan and studied singing there with Maestro Felma. He made his début in *Linda di Chamounix* in 1902 at the Teatro Sociale, Monza and followed this with guest appearances in Lisbon, Moscow and St. Petersburg. He was engaged in South America and appeared in Buenos Aires and Montevideo taking the part of the Duke in *Rigoletto* opposite Maria Barrientos. In 1910 he began a highly promising career, encouraged by Edoardo Garbin. He sang at La Scala in 1911 in performances of *Il Matrimonio Segreto* and *Königskinder*, both with Lucrezia Bori. He returned the following year to repeat his success in *Il Matrimonio Segreto* and he added *The Merry Wives of Windsor* to his repertoire. In 1913 he was engaged at the Teatro Massimo in Palermo and in 1914 he came to Covent Garden to sing Fenton in *Falstaff*. His early death the following year cut short a distinguished career. His voice as recorded in the Trio from Act 3 of *La Gioconda* reveals a well produced tenor, phrasing well and with excellent diction.

MARIA BARRIENTOS (1884 - 1946) was born in Barcelona and showed exceptional talents at a very early age. She made her début in *La Sonnambula* at the Teatro Lirico in Barcelona at the age of 14 and in the same season sang also in *Rigoletto*, *Dinorah* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. When she sang at the Teatro Politeama in Buenos Aires at the age of 17, she was immensely successful and was hailed as a new Patti. In 1900 she made a very successful tour of Germany. In 1904 her Scala début as Dinorah was highly acclaimed. Appearances in Cuba, Portugal, South America and Spain were alike much praised. In the years 1915 to 1920 she appeared each season at the Metropolitan Opera, New York. Especially notable were performances of *L'Elisir d'Amore* in which she sang with Caruso, and in 1918, the American première of *Le Coq d'Or*. She made what were probably her last operatic performances at the Teatro Real in Madrid in 1922 and then continued for some years to sing in concerts. In 1926 she made a recording of Manuel de Falla's "Canciones Populares Españolas" with the composer at the piano and in 1929 she sang in the première of Stravinsky's *Le Rossignol*. Later she taught in Buenos Aires. Her recording of the famous 'Shadow Song' from *Dinorah* is of particular interest in view of her having sung the role in her début season. Fortunately the

extra time available on the large disc gives her plenty of scope to display her crystalline-pure voice and her amazing coloratura technique with a dazzling cadenza.

ALESSANDRO BONCI (1870 - 1940) was born in Cesena and made his début at Parma in 1896 as Fenton in Verdi's *Falstaff*. He was immediately recognized as a tenor of outstanding merit and engagements all over Italy soon followed. He came to Covent Garden in 1900, making his début as Rodolfo in *La Bohème*. He returned in 1903, 1907 and 1908. He made his American début at the Manhattan Opera in 1906 and was engaged the following year at the Metropolitan Opera. He last sang in America in 1921, but continued to sing in Italy until 1935. His voice was a superb lyric tenor which he used with great skill. Fonotipia looked upon him as its rival to Caruso and recorded him extensively. Five of these 13¾" discs feature him and he responds to the extra time available by giving a superb display of bel canto. In all four of his solos he is able to phrase with greater freedom than on his many standard discs, and in the solos from *Mignon* and *La Gioconda* he caresses the lovely melodies with an elegance which immediately places him as one of the great singers of the twentieth century. His 'Dalla sua pace' is equally beautiful as singing, but the freedom he allows himself with frequent pauses on the high notes might not appeal to the Mozart purist of today. All in all, his contribution to this series is as delightful as it is unique.

GEORGETTE BRÉJEAN-SILVER (1870 - ) was born and studied singing in Paris and made her début at the Bordeaux Opéra in 1890. After singing in the French provinces for a few years, she reached Paris in 1894 and made her début at the Opéra Comique in that year as Manon in Massenet's Opera. She so impressed him that he wrote an additional aria, the famous 'Fabliau' especially for her, and it was subsequently included in the score. She recorded for Fonotipia and Odeon-de-Luxe in 1905-6. All her records are interesting, but she really surpasses herself in the duet from *Faust* with the tenor Scaramberg which is included in this album. Released from the necessity to watch the clock for every second, she expands her phrasing and the tone blossoms in consequence.

ICILIO CALLEJA (1882 - 1941) was born in Corfu and had a good career singing mainly in the Latin countries. He made his début at La Scala in 1907 in Catalani's *La Wally* and visited America, singing Radames for the Chicago Civic Opera in the 1912-13 season. He was again at La Scala in 1916 and continued for some years singing leading roles all over Italy. His voice was a powerful robust tenor with ringing high notes and his performances were highly dramatic and always powerfully acted.

MARIA CAMPORELLI ( - ) sang at the Teatro Vellini in Catania in 1904, firstly as Philine in *Mignon* and later as Micaëla in *Carmen*. She made her début at La Scala, Milan the same year in the comprimario role of a goatherd in *Dinorah*. The following December she sang in Messina at the Teatro Vittorio Emanuele,

again as Philine, and in 1905 she sang the role of Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore* in the same theatre. In 1906 she repeated her Philine in Genoa and in 1910 she sang Nedda in *I Pagliacci* at the Teatro Costanzi, Rome. These limited details and her voice as recorded in the Quartet from *La Bohème* rather suggest that her career was probably of secondary importance.

FERRUCIO CORRADETTI (1886 - 1939) was undoubtedly one of the most prolific and versatile of all recording artists, and was used by Fonotipia in innumerable concerted items, often with such celebrated artists as Bonci, Russ and Magini-Coletti. Details of his stage career are difficult to find, but he presumably confined his activities to the provincial Italian opera houses. He emigrated to the United States of America in 1915-16 and spent the rest of his life as a teacher of singing in New York where he died.

NAZZARENO DE ANGELIS (1881- 1962) was a leading bass for over thirty years. He was born in Aquila and made his début there in 1903. Within three years he was making his début at La Scala, as Alvisé in *La Gioconda*, in a cast which included Amato, Burzio and Zenatello, the conductor being Toscanini. He continued to sing well into the era of electric recording and his large resonant bass voice was used in a highly dramatic manner. The recording of the orchestra on this disc dating from 1908 is quite outstanding for its period.

ELISE FEINHALS (1869 - 1924) was the wife of the baritone Fritz Feinhals who was also born in 1869. Her few records include two Berliner discs in 1900 (scheduled to appear in this collection) and possibly other titles for Odeon. This 13¾" (35cm) disc displays an experienced artist with a beautiful mezzo-soprano voice, singing Erda's Warning with great authority. The baritone, who is not mentioned on the label, is probably Fritz Feinhals.

EDOARDO GARBIN (1866 - 1943) was a very celebrated tenor in the late 1890s and early 1900s. He created the role of Fenton in the world première of *Falstaff*. He sang at Covent Garden in 1907 in *Fedora*, *Madama Butterfly* and *Tosca*, but was not re-engaged. He sang at the Opéra Comique in Paris as late as 1917 as Pinkerton, but most of his successes were in Italy. His first records were in the Gramophone & Typewriter Company's red label 'Celebrity' series. Later records were made by the Fonotipia and Columbia companies. The Fonotipia records do him greater justice than the earlier series. If the voice lacks the beauty of the best of his contemporaries, few rival his sensitivity and expressiveness.

LUIGI LONGOBARDI ( - ) sang mainly secondary roles and his career appears to have been mainly confined to Italy. Biographical details are hard to come by, but his few records suggest a highly competent tenor without any great individuality.

GIANNINA LUKACEWSKA (1865 - ) was born in Poland. She studied singing in Warsaw and subsequently in Bologna. She appeared at the Carlo Fenice in

Genoa in 1888. She sang at La Scala in the 1896 season as Waltraute in *Die Götterdämmerung* and in 1897 in *Andrea Chénier*. She was at Covent Garden in the autumn season of 1906 when she sang the role of Suzuki to the Butterfly of Giachetti. No further appearances have been traced although she almost certainly had a successful career in Italy. Her most famous roles were: Mignon, Amneris and Madalena, and it is in the latter character that she is heard in the Quartet from *Rigoletto* in this album.

ORESTE LUPPI (1876 - 1964) was born in Rome and studied singing there. He made his début at Foligno when he was twenty-two and soon graduated to the major opera houses of Italy, including La Scala. His début there was as Lodovico in *Otello*, with Tamagno, Menotti and Carelli, on the 29th December 1899, with Toscanini conducting. He sang there again the following season. He came to Covent Garden for the autumn season on 1907. He also sang in South America. His voice was a powerful basso cantante, smoothly produced and used with great individuality.

ANTONIO MAGINI-COLETTI (1855 - 1912) was born near Ancona and studied in Rome, where he made his debut at the Costanzi as Valentine in *Faust* in 1882. After serving an apprenticeship in the Italian provinces he made his début at La Scala in 1887 in Samara's *Flora Mirabilis* together with Emma Calvé. The opera was a failure, but the soprano and baritone were highly praised. He continued at La Scala and in 1889 he created the role of Frank in Puccini's *Edgar*. He was at the Metropolitan Opera, New York for the 1891-2 season, singing leading roles in *Roméo et Juliette*, *Les Huguenots*, *Lohengrin*, *Fidelio*, *Aïda*, *Carmen*, *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Il Trovatore*. He was highly successful even in the presence of such luminaries as Patti, Albani, Lilli Lehmann, Lassalle and the de Reszke brothers. He returned to La Scala for the seasons 1900-1903, after which he resumed his international career. His first records were for the Zonophone company, appearing with the company's light blue 'Celebrity' label in 1902. Then, from 1905 onwards, his records were for the Fonotipia firm. He was already a veteran with a career of almost twenty-five years behind him, but his voice was still in its prime. His records of solos are really excellent; and the concerted items are all with artists of the highest standing.

ESTER MAZZOLENI (1883 - 1982) was born in Sebenio, Dalmatia and studied singing in Trieste and Pisa. She made her début in Rome at the Costanzi Theatre in 1906 as Leonora in *Il Trovatore*. Two years later she appeared at La Scala as Isabella in Franchetti's *Cristoforo Colombo*. She became a great favourite in Italy, singing at all the principal opera houses. She was the first soprano to sing *Aïda* at the arena in Verona in 1913, and she continued to sing at La Scala until 1917. She sang at the Colón, Buenos Aires in 1910 and again in 1919. She appeared at the Real Madrid in 1919 and finally retired in 1925. From 1926 onwards she taught singing in Palermo. Her voice was a powerful soprano with rather more vibrato than would appeal to English speaking collectors. She is heard at her best in the

concerted finale to Act III of *La Gioconda* where her voice is capable of dominating the ensemble when necessary.

GUISEPPE PACINI (1862 - 1910) was born in Florence. His début was in his native city in 1887 and he soon made a name for himself. He was able to hold his own among the leading baritones of his day; the wealth of competition included Battistini, de Luca, Giraldoni, Kaschmann, Magini-Coletti, Ruffo and Sammarco. He sang mostly in Italy and made his début at La Scala in 1895, in which year he was chosen to create the leading baritone role in Mascagni's *Guglielmo Ratcliff*. His rare records reveal a voice of dark richness which he used with great interpretative power.

ARMIDA PARSİ-PETTINELLA (1868 - 1949) was one of the finest mezzo-sopranos of her period. She made her début at the Costanzi Theatre in Rome in 1893 as Azucena, and first sang at La Scala in 1895 as Anna Bolena in Saint-Saëns' *Henry VIII*. She made a brief excursion to Monte Carlo in 1906, singing in two performances of *Don Carlo* with Farrar, de Marchi, Renaud, Chaliapin and Bouvet in the cast. However, she was firmly established in Italy and was apparently content to make her career there. She recorded for Fonotipia from 1905 onwards in solos and concerted numbers, always with artists of the first class. She made a sensation as Dalila in Saint Saëns' opera at La Scala in 1910, and her record of 'O Aprile foriero' from that opera is superb, with her beautifully trained mezzo-soprano even throughout its entire wide range. Luckily, too, with the extra time available on the large disc, she is able to expand and suggest the repose so necessary for this aria.

LINA PASINI-VITALE (1872 - 1959) made her début in 1892 at the Teatro Dal Verme, Milan as Cecilia in *Tilde* by Cilea. She was at the Colón, Buenos Aires in the 1910 and 1911 seasons, but her career was principally in Italy. At the beginning she sang mostly lyric soprano roles, but, as her voice developed, she turned to more dramatic parts, until 1926, towards the end of a long career, she was singing Brünnhilde and Kundry. Her final season appears to have been at the San Carlo, Naples in 1928. She made a number of interesting records for Fonotipia, including selections from *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser*, and was associated with such great singers as Zenatello and Parsi-Petinella in concerted items.

REGINA PINKERT (1869 - 1931) was a Polish soprano who made very early appearances at Covent Garden as Micaëla in *Carmen* and Roméo's page, Stephano in *Roméo et Juliette* in 1890 and 1891. She made her début in Italy in 1892 and reached La Scala in 1897, by which time her career was well established. She sang in *I Puritani* and *La Sonnambula* with Bonci as her partner in both operas. She was at Monte Carlo from 1895 to 1901, always in leading coloratura roles. Apparently she sang a great deal also in South America, but performance details are difficult to trace. All her recordings are rare, especially the one included in this album, made in 1905. Her clear, bright soprano sounds admirably suited to the role of Gilda.

GIANNINA RUSS (1879 - 1951) was born in Lodi and studied singing with Maestro Leoni in Milan. She sang at a charity concert in the Teatro Lirico in Milan on the 15th April 1903 with Tamagno as the star attraction. On 13th July in the same year she made her operatic début in *La Bohème* at the Teatro Politeama d'Azeglio, Bologna. She was warmly received by the critics. Later that year she sang at the Teatro dal Verme, Milan and in December she was engaged in Lisbon, where she sang in eight operas.

In 1904 she sang at Monte Carlo in *Aida* with Caruso and in June came to Covent Garden appearing in *Aida* and *Un Ballo in Maschera*, again with Caruso. She reached La Scala in the 1904-5 season, singing there in *Aida*, *Tannhäuser* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*; an amazing record for a debutante who had only two years of experience. In the next few years she sang in Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Alexandria, Cairo and Athens. She was at the Manhattan Opera, New York in the 1906-7 and the 1907-8 seasons, and from then on her career was truly international. Her greatest role was always considered to be Norma, which she sang for many years. Her last operatic appearances were in 1922 and her last public concert was probably at the Teatro del Popolo, Milan in 1925. After this she taught singing, her pupils included Gina Cigna, Clara Petrella and Margherita Grandi. Finally she retired to Verdi's Casa di Riposo in Milan and died there in 1951. Hers is the first voice to be heard in this album, and the first few phrases reveal an instrument of great purity and power, whilst later she demonstrates her ability to sing florid music with both agility and accuracy.

MARIO SAMMARCO (1868 - 1930) was born in Palermo and studied singing there and later in Milan. He made his début in Palermo in 1888, singing the role of Valentin in *Faust*. He sang for some years in the Italian provinces and reached La Scala in 1896, in which year he created the role of Gérard in the world première of *Andrea Chénier*. He came to Covent Garden in 1904, and sang there every season until 1914, returning for his final appearances in 1919. He first sang in the United States of America at the Manhattan Opera in 1907 and was later heard in Chicago, Boston and Philadelphia. In addition to *Andrea Chénier* he created roles in *Zazà* (Casart), *Germania* (Worms) and *Mosè* by Perosi. He was a fine actor with a dominating stage personality and a powerful high baritone voice. He was a great favourite at La Scala and Covent Garden. He is heard at his best in the duet with Garbin from *La Forza del Destino*.

ÉMILE SCARAMBERG (1863 - 1933) was born in Besançon, and for a time was a horn player in a military band. His voice was discovered, and after a period of training he made a début at the Opéra Comique in 1893 in Grétry's *Richard Coeur-de-Lion*. While he was singing in some of the smaller opera houses in France, he was heard by Pedro Gailhard, the director on the Paris Opéra, which led to his début there as Lohengrin in 1903. Amongst other roles he sang were Roméo, the Duke of Mantua, Raoul and Tannhäuser. He was at the Monte Carlo Opéra in 1894, where he sang the role of Turiddu, and he was famous for his singing of the title role in *Werther*. His career was brought to an end when he lost his voice in 1907.

In the duet from the Garden Scene in *Faust* he sings with great beauty of tone and some exquisite phrasing, and he is, as already stated, admirably partnered by Georgette Bréjean-Silver.

ADELINA STEHLE (1860 -1945) was born in Graz, Austria and studied singing in Milan. She made her début as Amina in *La Sonnambula* at Broni in 1881. She joined the company of La Scala in 1890, and created the roles of Nanetta in *Falstaff* and Walter in *La Wally*, at their world premières at the famous theatre. She apparently made only two records, both for Fonotipia, but she is assured of a secure place in operatic history as the original Nanetta to the Fenton of her husband, Edoardo Garbin. As Mimi in the quartet from *La Bohème* she displays a fine lyric soprano voice used with considerable charm.

RICCARDO STRACCIARI (1875 - 1955) was born near Bologna and after singing in some musical comedies, he studied with Maestro Masetti. There is some doubt as to the date of his professional début, but he himself stated that it was in Perosi's *La Resurrezione di Lazzaro* at the Comunale, Bologna in 1899. His success was immediate and he was in Lisbon in 1901, Genoa in 1903-4, La Scala in 1904-5, Covent Garden in 1905 and the Metropolitan Opera, New York in 1906, and within the next few years he was heard in Paris, Buenos Aires, Madrid and many other major operatic centres. His splendid high baritone voice made him particularly successful as Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Rigoletto*, and in 1929 and 1930 he appeared in complete recordings of these operas. He retained his full powers for a phenomenally long career and sang in opera until 1944. He commenced teaching in 1925; his most famous pupils were probably Alexander Sved and Boris Christoff.

John Freestone

*Dr. Wayne writes:*

I entirely agree with my good friend, John Freestone's remarks about the 13¾" Fonotipias; they are extremely rare and more so because of their physical vulnerability due to size per se.

In the cellar of Commendatore Martinez of Rome, almost forgotten, there existed a veritable reassurance trove of records of Italian origin, including a number of these 13¾" Fonotipias, preserved in once beautiful and elegant red albums. These deserve a special mention. They had been precision made for storing those extraordinary records and had they not existed I feel sure that even fewer of the discs would be extant. The lovely receptacles were constructed by Torriano & C., Milano to hold six giant records and neatly embossed with the full Fonotipia emblem, a facsimile of that seen on the shellac products.

Bonci's 'Se tu m'ami', the rarest of his four excellent solos, came into my possession twice, once with a lam-crack from Martinez; fortunately my second mint copy resided in the de Bry collection.

The only one of Barrientos 69002 I have found was in the collection of Dr. John Barnett of Spring, together with a superb pressing of Bonci *Mignon* 69007.

Of the series I believe that only two titles ran to a second thousand copies, but I am not certain of this, these would be Bonci's 'Cielo e mar' and his 'Ah non credevi tu'.

The only 13¾" Odeon I have ever come across is the Elise Feinhals 76200, from Robert Teuchler of Vienna. The remaining titles turned up in Italy.

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We believe that this series will come to be regarded by collectors, Historians and musicologists as the major means of access to a number of the most important of the earliest generation of recorded artists whose voices have survived only in recordings of surpassing rarity, and which are presented in this collection in the finest known specimens.

Symposium Records