

SYMPOSIUM RECORDS CD 1199

The Harold Wayne Collection – Volume 29

GIUSEPPE BORGATTI was born in Cento, Italy on the 17th March 1871. As a young man he earned his living as a stone-mason. One day while working he started singing and a lady who overheard him was so impressed that she persuaded him to study singing seriously. He made his début at Castelfranco, Veneto in 1893 and quickly achieved such success that his début at La Scala, Milan followed only three years later, on the 23rd March 1896, creating the title role in the world première of Giordano's *Andrea Chénier*. He soon became Italy's leading exponent of Wagnerian roles and was invited by Toscanini to sing Siegfried at La Scala. Tragedy cut short his great career when he became blind. After this he sang in concerts and devoted himself to teaching singing. One of his most successful pupils was Heddle Nash. He made records for Fonotipia in 1905, later for Pathé, and finally, in 1928 he recorded two Wagnerian titles for Columbia. Unfortunately they were sung in Italian translations. He died in Reno on the 18th October 1950 at the age of 79.

ICILIO CALLEJO was born in Corfu in 1880 and died in Milan in 1941. He came from a family of Spanish origin and studied law for a time, but his powerful voice was soon recognised. He sang for some months in the Italian provinces before making his début at La Scala, Milan in *La Wally* with Toscanini conducting. He sang in Chicago in 1912, but his main career was in Italy and South America. His robust tenor and his dramatic ability brought him great success in the Latin countries, particularly as Otello.

FERNANDO CARPI was the son of a well-known tenor who sang at Covent Garden for three seasons from 1875. He was born in 1876 and made his début at Lecce in 1898 in Gounod's *Faust*. He travelled widely in the following years and was engaged at Covent Garden for the autumn season of 1906, singing principal roles in *Rigoletto*, *Tosca* and *La Traviata* with Melba and Sammarco. He was the Alfredo on the occasion of Tetrizzini's début in 1907, and although he never sang at La Scala, he was a great favourite at the San Carlo in Naples and the Costanzi in Rome. He was at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in 1916, singing Tonio in Donizetti's *La Fille du Regiment* and Alfredo in *La Traviata* opposite Frieda Hempel. He also appeared in Chicago in 1918 and made his final operatic appearance in Venice as Elvino in *La Sonnambula* in 1922. He retired in 1923 and taught singing in Prague. He died in 1959.

ROMANO CIAROFF-CERINI was of Russian origin and 1878 has been given as his date of birth. Little is known of his early career, but he was acclaimed for his singing in Brescia in 1912 and later the same year he sang at the Costanzi in Rome as Alfredo to the Violetta of Rosina Storchio. However, much of his career in Italy appears to have been in the smaller theatres. He sang the role of Falco in Mascagni's *Isabeau* in Pisa in 1913 and then appeared at the Rossini Theatre in Venice in *Faust* and *Falstaff*. In 1920 he sang principal roles at the Kursaal in Lugano and Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at the Paganini in Genoa.

EDOARDO GARBIN was born in 1865 and after studying with Selva and Orefice he made his début as Alvaro in *La Forza del Destino* in Vicenza in 1891. The following year in Genoa he created the role of Guevara in Franchetti's *Cristoforo Colombo*. In 1892 he created the role of Fenton in the world première of Verdi's *Falstaff* at La Scala, Milan and in 1900 he was the first Dufresne in Leoncavallo's *Zazà*. He appeared in Covent Garden in 1908 as Loris, Cavaradossi and Pinkerton, but the critics were generally unfavourable and he did not return. His last operatic appearances were in 1918. He died in 1943.

MARIO GILION was born in Marseille in 1870 and died in 1914 at the early age of forty-four. He made his début at Monza in 1901 as Vasco da Gama in Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*. In 1902 he appeared in Modena, Budapest, Venice, Genoa and Turin where he sang Manrico in a performance of *Il Trovatore* with Magini-Coletti as de Luna. He was in Warsaw in 1905, where he sang as Arnaldo to the Guillaume Tell of Battistini, and for the next few years had a busy international career. One of his last performances was at the Liceo, Barcelona, where he sang Manrico to the Leonora of Boninsegna, in 1912.

My thanks to Larry Lustig, Richard Copeman and Sid Gray for their help in the biographical notes.

GIUSEPPE BORGATTI

1 Tosca-E lucevan le stelle. Cavaradossi's cry of despair is a ready vehicle for the robust voice of Borgatti. He sings with great beauty of tone and considerable emotion in this highly individual interpretation.

2 (a) Die Lotosblume (b) Du bist wie eine Blume Why the celebrated Wagnerian tenor chose to record two German Lieder in Italian translations is something of a mystery. If one forgets the original texts and regards the pieces as pleasant melodies sung with easy and warm tone, then they should please all but the purists. The style is very Italian with a well executed diminuendo towards the close of the second song.

ICILIO CALLEJA

3 Aida-Di N?pata le gole In this scene Radames reveals to Aida that his army will go by the Pass of Napata, and her father overhears him. Calleja dominates the scene expressing his remorse when he realizes that he has been betrayed.

4 Otello-Ora e per sempre addio sante memorie Otello, believing himself to have been deceived by Desdemona, sings "Now and forever goodbye to my sacred memories". Calleja sings with tremendous fervour and a wealth of ringing tone in this outstanding version.

FERNANDO CARPI

5 Lucia di Lammermoor-Fra poco a me ricovero The grief-stricken Edgar sings sadly of the realisation that Lucia is dead. Carpi uses his fine lyric tenor to great effect in this stylish version of the aria.

6 Mignon-Le tua bell'alma In this love song Wilhelm expresses the depth of his affection for the sleeping Mignon. Again Carpi sings with great feeling and fine tone.

7 Manon-Il sogno Des Grieux describes to Manon how he dreamt of a little white cottage in the country where the two of them could live in peace and happiness. Carpi sings with delightful ease and includes a splendid diminuendo on the top A of the climax. He uses considerable vibrato which no doubt appealed to opera lovers in his native Italy.

ROMANO CIAROFF-CERINI

8 Les Pêcheurs de Perles-Mi par d'udir ancora Nadir, a pearl fisher, recalls the beauty of Leila's appearance and voice. Ciaroff-Cerini sings with good sustained tone and easy high notes. He also sings the aria as given in the score and thus does not include the interpolated phrase at the end. Caruso, Gigli, Lugo and countless others were guilty of this unnecessary addition.

9 Werther-Ah non mi ridestar The artist makes the most of this lovely aria in which Werther sings the famous "Stances d'Ossain", producing a fine lyrical quality and phrasing with elegance.

10-13 I Gioielli della Madonna -Madonna con sospiri
-Madonna del dolore
-Prostato nella polvere
-Sanno d'odore d'incenso

I have chosen to give a brief résumé here, as the exact excerpts are difficult to isolate. Gennaro, a blacksmith is in love with Maliella who goads him into stealing the jewels of the Madonna from the local church and giving them to her. In a moment of mystical ecstasy, when he presents her with the jewels, Maliella gives herself to Gennaro and then, realizing the horror of his sacrilege, she commits suicide as Gennaro returns the jewels to the church and then stabs himself.

The first two extracts are taken from Act 1 and the last two from Act 3.

Ciaroff-Cerini sings with great dramatic intensity and the soprano Sarzanini sounds suitably hysterical and distraught.

These recordings were obviously made shortly after the first performance of the opera in 1911; the artists were presumably very early exponents of their roles.

EDOARDO GARBIN

14 Lucrezia Borgia-Di pescatore ignobile Gennaro meets his mother, Lucrezia Borgia, but does not know her true identity. He tells her that he was brought up by a humble fisherman whom he assumes was his father. Garbin uses his large voice rather unsympathetically, and makes no attempt to sing the aria in the true bel canto style.

15 Tosca (Puccini) E lucevan le stelle Cavaradossi deplores his fate, and sings that he will die despairing. Garbin sings better here, the verismo music suiting his style much more, but almost every great tenor has recorded this aria and there are many other superior versions available.

16 Adriana Lecouvreur-Ma dunque é vero Adriana, an actress, falls in love with Maurizio not realizing that he is the Count of Saxony. Here she asks him if he is indeed the famous nobleman and he responds by declaring his love for her. Again Garbin is more at home in this verismo work, and Stehle sings with intelligence and dramatic force.

17 Adriana Lecouvreur-No più nobile Maurizio's solo is from Act IV. In reply to Adriana's hesitance he declares his love and admiration for her. This is quite the best of Garbin's contributions to this volume. He modifies his powerful voice and expresses his love with great tenderness.

MARIO GILION

18 Guillaume Tell-O muto asil...Corriam corriamo Arnold, son of William Tell, sings of his home and recalls the peaceful days of his youth, and then, having received news of his father's capture by the Austrian tyrant Gessler, he calls upon the Swiss people to follow him in the fight against the oppressors. Gilion sings the difficult aria with its high tessitura with considerable abandon and tackles the high C's of the cabaletta fearlessly. The result is an exciting performance, although the vocal quality in itself is not outstandingly beautiful.

19 La Juive-Rachele allor che Iddio...Dio mi inspira Eleazar sings a tearful farewell to his foster-child Rachel, calling upon God to inspire him. In the cabaletta Gilion sings with easy mastery and a ringing top C.

20 Il Trovatore-Ah si ben mio...Di quella pira In the opening aria Manrico sings lovingly of his sweetheart Leonora, and then, in "Di quella pira", having heard of his foster mother's capture by the Count di Luna, he expresses his anger and his determination to rescue her. Gilion again sings high C's with splendid ringing tone. Verdi did not write these, but every self-respecting Manrico feels bound to add them.

21 Andrea Chénier-Un di all'azzurro Andrea Cheniér is asked to improvise a poem. He starts off in lyrical mood, but soon forgets himself and launches into a tirade against the excesses of the aristocracy. Gilion declaims the music with sincerity and abandon and sings with passion. The aria suits him admirably and the result is one of his best records.

John Freestone

Dr. Wayne writes:

All Borgatti recordings are very rare, the sides included here being without doubt the most difficult of all to find. His prowess in Italy as the first Siegfried undoubtedly sold more of the sister Fonotipia record, which I encountered in the '60s several times. As Jack Freestone remarks, why the Schumann songs? I have seen the disc only once. The Pathés were occasionally seen, and the scarce late Columbias almost never.

The recordings by Calleja, with those on an earlier volume (Symposium CD 1113), are the only examples I ever came across, but he was seen more often in South America, especially on "Discor" lists. Incidentally, he also made six titles for Pathé in 1918 and they are also of excerpts from *Aida* and *Otello*.

It may be noted that many of the 69000-series of Fonotipias are much rarer than many of the earlier 39000 and 92000-series. This is due to the occurrence of the first world war. Similarly, of Fernando Carpi, the occasional example, but that is all.

Of Ciaroff-Cerini there are here six of the titles which I assembled. The Wolf-Ferrari items are much the rarer of them, few collections contain even a solitary piece. I highly recommend his other Wolf-Ferrari excerpts, from *Le Donne Curiose* and "Ah, lève toi, soleil!" from *Roméo et Juliette*, both top rarities among Fonotipias, which I hope will appear later in the series.

Fonotipia records of Garbin are by no means as rare in comparison with others in this volume, but the importance of the piece with Stehle is to be noted as she made only one other record, also with her husband, and available on an earlier volume (Symposium CD 1113). She was the first Nedda, the first Mistress Ford and the first La Wally in the opera of that name; three creator parts in the space of two years.

All of Gilion's records have appeared in my collecting days. Nearly always they are very worn so that much patience is required to acquire first class copies. The most difficult to find are the pieces from *Siberia*, *Sansone e Dalila* and *Sigurd* on 39657/8 and 39795/6.

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