

SYMPOSIUM RECORDS CD 1286

In *Recollections of Caruso* Emil Ledner, his European manager, recalls his surprise when the great tenor suggested that they visit a synagogue in Hamburg. Caruso explained, "I have found that the Jewish singers cultivate in their performances a unique skill and method of singing. The cracking of the voice, the attack of the note, the ways of getting round vocal difficulties which perhaps lie in the text rather than the music are not so easy for anyone to imitate." The source is weak on dates, but the event could not have taken place before the Autumn 1906, when Caruso first sang in Hamburg under Ledner's management. At the peak of his career, widely recognized as the world's number one tenor, Caruso added, "For this reason... I visit Jewish synagogues whenever I have time." Ledner adds that, "Over the years we sought out synagogues... in Vienna... Berlin... Frankfurt... Paris... and Budapest. Caruso would listen with excitement, straining his ears at every solo passage of the leading singer. We would drive home and there he would practice for half an hour, unrestrained, what seemed to him so valuable – attack, cracking and covering of the note."

For collectors of historic opera records, the greatest exponent of this cantorial style of singing which so attracted Caruso, is Hermann Jadlowker. The two were more or less contemporary, Jadlowker slightly the younger. It is certainly possible that Caruso heard Jadlowker in performance; if so, we have no knowledge of what he thought. At a Metropolitan Opera matinée on February 11th 1910 Jadlowker sang Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, followed, as is usual, by *I Pagliacci* in which Caruso himself sang Canio. This was Jadlowker's second performance in a complete opera at the Metropolitan Opera, the previous night he had appeared as Lohengrin. We can hardly imagine a greater contrast than between Lohengrin, the peerless Wagnerian knight, and Turiddu, the faithless verismo lover. It is an indication of Jadlowker's extraordinary versatility and stamina that he could take on two such roles within less than twenty four hours.

Hermann Jadlowker was Jewish, as were many in his home town of Riga, then part of Russia, but subsequently capital of the independent state of Latvia. Attribution of nationality can be complex. When Kaiser Wilhelm was host to Russian Tsar Nicholas at the Berlin Staatsoper, he proudly introduced his Lohengrin. The Tsar is alleged to have responded, "Your Lohengrin may be, but my subject." Much later, when Jadlowker returned to Riga to become Chief Cantor of the Great Synagogue, he presumably did so as a citizen of the now independent Latvia. By the time it was swallowed back into the Soviet Union, Jadlowker was living in what was then Palestine. After 1948 he would have become an Israeli citizen.

It is probable that Jadlowker's first language was Yiddish, but that he was equally proficient in German. He joined the choir in the Great Synagogue at an early age, but his orthodox father was adamantly opposed to a career as a professional singer. At the age of sixteen he ran away to Vienna where he had the good fortune to come into contact with Rabbi Schorr, the senior cantor at the main synagogue and also the father of Friedrich Schorr. The Rabbi must have been a good talent spotter since he engaged both Jadlowker and Joseph Schwarz for his own synagogue choir. Jadlowker also enrolled at the Vienna Conservatoire, from which he graduated in 1897.

After his début in Kreutzer's *Das Nachtlager von Granada* in Cologne the same

year, Jadlowker's operatic career seems not to have progressed until 1906 when he was engaged by the Royal Court Opera in Karlsruhe, then the state capital of Baden. Over the next few years he laid the foundations of his career, developing a wide repertoire. Chronologies of German opera houses are too incomplete to chart Jadlowker's career adequately. However, in an article in *Record Collector* the late Alfred Frankenstein drew on material collected by Lim Lai, to give some indication of the wide range of roles undertaken in these early years. Jadlowker's versatility is well demonstrated, French opera: *Carmen*, *Faust*, *Les Huguenots*, *Lakmé*, *Manon* and *La Dame Blanche*; Verdi: *Rigoletto*, *Otello* and *Il Trovatore*; Mozart: *Don Giovanni* and others. All these would have been sung in German, also the language of the vast majority of his records for the Odeon Company, made from 1907 to 1912.

I have always suspected that language might have been a limiting factor in Jadlowker's international career, even though mixed-language performances were by no means unknown in the United States. When Jadlowker sang the title role in *Faust* in Boston, Sibriakov sang Méphistophélès in Russian. However, the leading local critic H. T. Parker, commented that Jadlowker's Faust and Alfredo were 'a trifle Teutonic', and was clearly unhappy that the latter was actually sung in German, opposite the Violetta of Lipkowska.

Jadlowker's most important engagement outside Germany was with the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and the *Metropolitan Opera Annals* show that between January 1910 and March 1912 he gave some 90 performances in 14 roles. His most frequent role was Lohengrin, closely followed by the King's son in Humperdinck's *Königskinder*, a part he had created. This work was largely a vehicle for Geraldine Farrar, although Kolodin describes Jadlowker's performance in it as outstanding. Two other American première in which Jadlowker participated were of works which achieved much less success, Thuille's *Lobetanz* and Leo Blech's *Versiegelt*.

The singers at the Metropolitan Opera were always amongst the finest in the world as, until the depression, fees were never a problem. It is clearly a tribute to Jadlowker that he could hold his own with such company. During his relatively short career in New York Jadlowker had the opportunity of singing with many of the greatest artists. His first Lohengrin was opposite the Elsa of Fremstad and the Ortrud of Gadski, whilst Destinn sang Santuzza to his Turiddu. Jadlowker's high standing may also be demonstrated by participation in a Gala performance on 1st March 1910. This commenced with Caruso and Destinn in the Prologue and Act I of *I Pagliacci*, and continued with Pavlova in ballet, and the final act of *Il Trovatore* with Riccardo Martin, Gadski, Homer and Dinah Gilly. Jadlowker's contribution was in Act II of *Tosca* alongside Farrar and Scotti. After yet more of Pavlova, the evening ended with Caruso in Act III of *La Gioconda*. Toscanini conducted.

In May 1910 the Metropolitan Opera visited Paris, although an orchestra recruited locally was used. Jadlowker appeared on the second night, a double bill of *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *I Pagliacci*. The theatre was packed, Caruso again sang Canio. However, the first voice heard at the Théâtre de Châtelet that night was Jadlowker's, apostrophizing the Santuzza of Fremstad; the conductor for *Cavalleria Rusticana* (but not for *I Pagliacci*) was Toscanini. Jadlowker's other role in Paris was Fenton in *Falstaff* with Scotti in the title role, the three female parts being sung by Alda, Alten and Homer, and Toscanini was again in the pit.

In January 1912 Jadlowker participated in the first Metropolitan Opera performance of Wolf-Ferrari's *Le Donne Curiose*. The cast included Farrar, Scotti and Didur. Toscanini conducted, and the performances were considered one of his finest achievements at the Metropolitan. This could almost be counted as a world première: leaving aside the title, it seems a curious piece of operatic lore that this was the very first time the work had been performed in the original Italian. According to Loewenberg's *Annals of the Opera* its première, in January 1905, was in German and it was subsequently sung in Flemish, Polish, Hungarian and Swedish.

A performance of *Königskinder* in the Spring of 1912 marked the end of Jadlowker's association with the Metropolitan Opera, and also, to all intents and purposes, the end of his international career. He should have appeared in the Covent Garden première of *Königskinder* in 1913, but – for whatever reason – this fell through. Henceforth his operatic career seems to have been almost exclusively in Germany, although his concert appearances ranged more widely.

Jadlowker joined the company of the Königliches Opernhaus in Berlin in 1911. Until 1914 his contract there seems to have run in parallel with a continuing engagement at Karlsruhe. The circumstances of this arrangement are unclear, but it is likely that Kaiser Wilhelm had some involvement. In May 1911 Jadlowker appeared in Auber's *La Muette de Portici* at the Wiesbaden festival, which had been established by the Kaiser himself, and was run by Graf von Hülsen-Haeseler, a key figure in Berlin theatrical and operatic circles. It was already known that Jadlowker, who was praised for his sensitive musicianship at Wiesbaden, would be in Berlin for the next season. Additional interest attaches to the Wiesbaden *La Muette de Portici*. It is probable that this was the first occasion on which Jadlowker and Hempel, a long standing Berlin favourite, had sung together on stage, though they had already worked together in the recording studio.

During his final years at Karlsruhe, Jadlowker appeared in *La Juive*, *Mignon* and *Fidelio*. The record of his work at Berlin is equally difficult to assemble, but it seems that the first new production in which he participated was *La Traviata* in September 1912, followed by *La Muette de Portici* two months later. In between he sang Bacchus in the world première of *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Stuttgart; the cast also included Siems and Jeritza. He repeated his role at the Berlin première in February 1913. In October that year he sang the title role in *Don Carlos*. This was some years before the major Verdi revival which gathered pace after 1919, and became so important a feature of opera in the Weimar Republic. Indeed, had his career on the stage lasted longer, Jadlowker might well have played a major role in that revival. As it was, in 1914 he sang Manrico in a new production of *Il Trovatore*, with a cast which included Claire Dux and Emmi Leisner. Towards the end of 1916 he sang what must have been his first Otello. Once again Dux was the soprano. Earlier in the year he extended still further his French opera repertoire when he appeared in *L'Africaine*. The baritone in both *Otello* and *L'Africaine* was his close contemporary, Joseph Schwarz, the other former choirboy from synagogues in Riga and Vienna, and fellow graduate of the Vienna Conservatoire. Schwarz had an important career in Berlin, and it is likely that the two sang frequently together in the years 1915 to 1919. They appeared in *Carmen* in April 1919 not long before the end of Jadlowker's period at what was now the Staatsoper.

It is a mark of the artist's versatility that he ranged so widely in what were to be the final years of his operatic career. At the end of 1915 he added Parsifal to his repertoire.

He also sang in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *La Juive*, *Königskinder* and *Fidelio*, the latter opposite the Leonore of Wildbrunn. Earlier he had sung this role in Amsterdam with Edyth Walker as Leonore, and Mengelberg conducting. He also appeared in *Lohengrin* there.

By 1919 Jadlowker was developing his activities on the concert platform as distinct from the opera stage. A concert at the Philharmonie on 15th March 1919 suggests an artist confident of his vocal prowess; it included arias from Gluck's *Paride e Elena*, *Idomeneo*, *Lohengrin*, *La Favorite*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Aida* and *L'Africaine*. Other concert programmes of the period show him in arias and duets from *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, one of Gluck's *Iphigenie* operas, Marschner's *Hans Heiling*, *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, *La Forza del Destino*, *La Bohème*, and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. In a sense these can be considered as primarily operatic events. He seems to have been less interested in Lieder, although this form certainly featured in his concerts. One programme shows him singing Schumann duets with Claire Dux. His final acoustic recordings, which were made in 1924, include many fine items, some of which are included on this compact disc. By 1927, the year of his only electrical recordings (they are entirely of Lieder) there is a marked decline, a little more effort is needed, and the beauty and agility are not what they were. This may have helped Jadlowker to determine on a change of direction, for in 1929 he returned to Riga as Chief Cantor in the very same Great Synagogue where he had started in the choir.

Although the spiritual leader of a community is the Rabbi, nevertheless the Cantor of an orthodox community is required to be a person of learning, with detailed knowledge of Jewish beliefs and religion. Alfred Frankenstein states that Jadlowker fell out with one of the local rabbis when he suggested that an organ be installed in the synagogue. In 1938 he left Riga for Palestine, where some of his family had already settled. He was accompanied by his wife, Anna, they were married in 1903, but she died two years after their arrival. In Palestine Jadlowker taught singing and joined in the first abortive efforts to found a national opera. He appeared from time to time in concerts, often charity events for Jewish victims in Latvia. It seems that he also made one final operatic appearance in *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Jerusalem in 1943. This may well have been his first in that opera, but I have never been able to find any certain confirmation of the event, such as a programme or newspaper report.

Jadlowker left an impressive legacy of recordings, 235 being listed in the *Record Collector*. Almost half were made for Odeon in the period 1907-12. They cover his main engagement at Karlsruhe as well as his time in America. His final Odeon sessions were probably in mid-1912; immediately after them he moved to the Deutsche Grammophon/Gramophone Company/Victor group. The seven published records made by Victor in the United States, around the time of his final appearances at the Metropolitan Opera, seem to have been made before the final Odeon sessions. Six of these seven were almost immediately issued by Victor (excluding an aria from *Die Zauberflöte*) and six entered the Gramophone Company's international catalogue (excluding an aria from *Lohengrin*). Presumably the group anticipated a continuing international career which did not materialize.

These records were all made in Germany between September 1912 and 1917. However, few, if any, were available elsewhere. A lengthy hiatus in Jadlowker's recording activities followed, presumably occasioned by the exigencies of war, and the

consequent split between what had been the English and German branches of one company. In 1924, almost at the end of the acoustic period, there was a series of records, for Deutsche Grammophon, divided more or less equally between operatic arias and Lieder. The final recordings, for the same company, were by the new electrical process, and consisted entirely of Lieder. Whilst some of the records were aimed at the export market, the bulk of sales would have been in the German-speaking world. All told, and with the exception of the Victor records and those few Deutsche Grammophon records which survived to be re-numbered in the double-sided series, Jadowker's records tend to be relatively uncommon, and some are very rare indeed, the more so as during the Nazi period records involving Jewish artists were destroyed. Many of the recordings of French and Italian opera were made in German. This is not particularly surprising, since the German market was the prime focus, and all German opera houses performed in the vernacular. However, this may well have deterred some contemporary record collectors.

The records demonstrate above all Jadowker's incredible range, from Mozart to Wagner; from Donizetti and Rossini to Puccini and Wolf-Ferrari. French opera is particularly well represented, especially by Meyerbeer, Massenet and Gounod. The more unusual items include arias from *La Muette de Portici*, Napravnik's *Dubrovski*, *Rienzi*, *Halka*, *Die Königin von Saba*, Flotow's *Alessandro Stradella*, Lortzing's *Zar und Zimmermann* and Méhul's *Joseph*.

The operatic items include a considerable number of duets with other major artists. Pride of place must go to the long series made with Frieda Hempel, but those with Claire Dux and Maria Labia are equally fine. The songs and Lieder include items by Liszt, Gretchaninoff and Grieg. It is probably no exaggeration to suggest that the recorded legacy of no other great singer of the 78rpm era equals that of Jadowker in terms of sheer musical interest.

The voice heard on records is highly individual; for some it may not make for the most easy listening. One cannot (or should not) just sit back, hoping to be enveloped by sheer beauty of sound, as is, I suggest, one way of enjoying the recordings of some of the great Italian tenors. Jadowker's is a muscular voice making its major impact through unrivalled technical agility. The only other male singer able to match his trill and fioritura, in full voice too, and able to sustain a long note is Sirota; Sirota from the same geographical area and cantorial background, but, as is very clear from his few attempts, no opera singer. It may be worth noting that such qualities are of limited value when it comes to Wagner. Jadowker's Wagner records are amongst his dullest; they seem to me to exhibit a kind of wooden quality in the middle of the voice. This may be to some extent a fault of the recording engineers. Regretably, these are the most frequently found of all Jadowker's records, and they are certainly amongst the least interesting. By contrast not one of the Mozart recordings, which demonstrate Jadowker's unique style and technical mastery, gained such wide circulation.

The intention of this recital is neither to offer a cross-section of Jadowker's entire recorded legacy, nor to concentrate on his rarest records, but rather to present his very best operatic work. The two Mozart arias are virtually 'hors concours'. No other version of the *Idomeneo* aria offers anything remotely comparable to Jadowker's coloratura. It is equally in evidence in the arias from *Fra Diavolo* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. The other Mozart aria is in some ways even more remarkable, although a less obvious vehicle for Jadowker's virtuosity. It was recorded many years before the *Idomeneo* and the vocal

timbre is considerably softer. The voice is flexible and the sustained notes have a rare beauty.

I sense a kind of kinship in the pieces from *Fidelio*, *Die Königin von Saba*, *Dubrovski* and *Eugene Onegin* in that each, a man alone, facing a supreme challenge, can be seen as an outsider. I cannot help wondering if, in 1924, when he made these records, Jadowlker saw in these roles echoes of his own position; born a Latvian, but a subject of the Russian Tsar; in employment in Germany, but, obviously, aware that in his talent was a passport to areas of society frequently inaccessible to members of his race. Leaving aside speculation, all four pieces are sung superbly with exactly the right amount of plangency. Spread over two 78rpm sides, Lenski's aria is a particularly full and desirable version.

In assessing the records in this album, it may be of interest that the aria from *Der Freischütz* is from Jadowlker's first recording session, and the pieces from *Eugene Onegin* and *Dubrovski* are from his last to include operatic fare. I find little evidence of obvious vocal decline, although it has to be said that the freshness and agility of the voice in Max's aria is particularly appealing.

The disc also includes four duets. Those from *Les Huguenots* and *La Traviata* are from the series made with Frieda Hempel. The former is another reminder of the virtues of what we loosely call 'the golden age of singing'. It is possible to argue that much of Meyerbeer's very best music was written for pairs of singers, there are three duets in *Les Huguenots*. Hempel and Jadowlker essay the lengthy duet between the Queen and Raoul.

According to Vivian Liff in *Opera on Record—Volume 2*, "this version approaches the ideal, for all the dynamic markings are scrupulously observed and the performance has the utmost delicacy and elegance." In this and their other duets the voices of Hempel and Jadowlker blend perfectly. Certainly Jadowlker always seems to be a very sympathetic and supportive partner. He must incidentally also have been a superb Raoul in *Les Huguenots*. His recording of 'Plus blanche' exhibits a rare beauty. The aria is taken slowly and softly, the final climax seemingly effortless. It seems a tragedy that neither Odeon nor Deutsche Grammophon thought fit to record a version of the final duet from the opera with Jadowlker and Emmy Destinn, considered by many to have been the last truly great exponent of Valentine. The duet from *Lucia di Lammermoor* exists in two versions, with Claire Dux and with Frieda Hempel, but the former version is much fuller and offers another fine and exciting piece of singing. However, my favourite of all the duets in which Jadowlker participated is the piece from *Un Ballo in Maschera*. It may be somewhat truncated and it may not be typical Jadowlker, but this is visceral, dramatic singing.

As an operatic singer Jadowlker stands alone; he is not part of any established tradition or school of Latvian, Russian or German singing. Whilst there have been many other important Jewish singers, it is certainly not possible to speak of any identifiable Jewish school of operatic singing. I know of no other Jewish operatic singer on record who embodies so much of the cantorial tradition, and none with a comparable technique; vocal agility, flexibility and a coloratura which is surely unique, at least for tenors. But, fashions change. Jadowlker's era was well before the revival of interest in, first, Mozart's operas and, subsequently, early nineteenth century Italian opera. If there were a contemporary with similar qualities and attributes he would surely not be singing so wide a range of roles – certainly no Wagner. He would surely concentrate on the late eighteenth

and early nineteenth centuries, above all Mozart, Bellini, Donizetti, Rossini.

Stanley Henig

Acknowledgements: Symposium Records is grateful to Paul Lewis and Adrian Tuddenham for assistance with the production.

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