

SYMPOSIUM RECORDS CD 1342

SIGRID ARNOLDSON – Soprano

Sigrid Arnoldson was born in Stockholm in 1861. She was taught by her father, Carl Oskar Arnoldson (Stockholm 1830-Karlsbad 1881) and Fritz Arlberg (Leksand 1830-Oslo 1896), respectively the most significant Swedish tenor and baritone of their time. Both were students of Julius Günther (Göteborg 1816-Stockholm 1904) a distinguished tenor, pupil of Manuel Garcia II, colleague of Jenny Lind and teacher, also, of Ellen Gulbranson and John Forsell.

After some concert appearances in Sweden and Norway in 1882 and 1883 Sigrid Arnoldson travelled to Paris for further studies with Maurice Strakosch, teacher, manager and brother-in-law of Adelina Patti, with Mathilde Marchesi, teacher of Emma Calvé, Nellie Melba and Emma Eames, and with Désirée Artôt, a student of Pauline Viardot-Garcia, who, after a brilliant career as mezzo-soprano and soprano, taught, amongst others, her own daughter, Lola Artôt de Padilla.

Désirée Artôt, it seems, had been engaged to Tchaikovsky, but she married Mariano Padilla y Ramos, a Spanish baritone who had a big career, and after completing her studies it was with Mariano Padilla y Ramos that Sigrid Arnoldson went on a concert tour of Austria.

Arnoldson's stage début was as Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in 1885 at Prague. This part was also the vehicle of her first and very successful appearances at the Imperial Opera in Moscow in 1886 and at London's Drury Lane Theatre in 1887. For the critics she was the successor to Jenny Lind, and thus "the new Swedish nightingale." The years 1886 to 1888 were busy years for her with, besides those mentioned, stage appearances in Amsterdam, Bâle, the Hague, at Monte Carlo, at both the Opéra Comique and at the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris, in St. Petersburg and in Warsaw. There were also concert and stage engagements in Italy. In the years 1888, 1892, 1893 and 1894 she sang at Covent Garden; in 1891, 1892 and 1902 at the Opéra Comique. In the season 1893 to 1894 Arnoldson sang in New York at the Metropolitan Opera and made an extensive concert tour of the United States.

Sigrid Arnoldson continued to have a very important career both in opera and on the concert platform. She sang frequently in Russia and made appearances in Amsterdam, Berlin (1899), Budapest, Dresden (1907-1909), Frankfurt-am-Main (1896-1897), The Hague, Lemberg, Prague, Riga (1898), Stockholm and Zürich (1895 and 1900); this list is by no means complete.

In 1891 Arnoldson was honoured with the Swedish decoration 'Litteris et artibus' and In 1910 she became a member of the Academy of Music in Stockholm. She was also a Swedish Court Singer. In 1911 she retired from singing and taught in Vienna until 1938 and then in Stockholm.

Arnoldson was married to the impresario Maurice Fischhof. She died in 1943.

Arnoldson made her Covent Garden début as Zerlina in 1886, a cold or tiredness resulting in mediocre reviews. Melba's début the same season was likewise not particularly noteworthy. There were six performances of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with Battistini, de Lucia and Edouard de Reszke and there was great acclaim for her Baucis in Gounod's *Philémon et Baucis*. George Bernard Shaw's sole comment was, "Miss Arnoldson added Oscar to her list of successes". It seems that her husband wrote a letter of complaint to Augustus Harris about other artists being better treated. Harris did not take kindly to criticism; her Covent Garden career ended. One cannot but wonder if a similar reason limited her American career; she sang there for only one season.

Her début at Metropolitan Opera in 1893 coincided with those of Emma Calvé Francisco Vignas and Pol Plançon when *Philémon et Baucis* was given with *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Krehbiel [*New York Herald Tribune*] allotted to Calvé the major praise. Arnoldson's voice he found "small, scarcely equal in volume to the demands of the theatre, but ... of fine quality and [used] with refined taste that is highly commendable." On December 18th she appeared with Ancona, Lassalle, Nordica, Scalchi and Jean and Edouard de Reszke in the first of those performances of *Les Huguenots* which became known as the 'Nights of the Seven Stars'.

Sigrid Arnoldson had a voice of remarkable beauty and warmth, a fine coloratura technique and a range of three octaves. To these was allied a musical intelligence with which not all singers have been blessed. Thus she was well suited to an operatic repertoire which included Susanna, Cherubino, Zerlina and Papagena; Marguérite de Valois (*Les Huguenots*) and Dinorah; Rosina; Marie (*La Fille du Régiment*); Eudoxia (*La Juive*); Mignon and Ophélie; Violetta and Oscar (*Un Ballo in Maschera*); Marguérite (*Faust*), Baucis, Juliette, Tamara (*Demon*); Micaëla and Carmen (including substituting for Calvé); Tatiana; Manon, Sophie (*Werther*-American and British premières) and Nedda.

The records reflect well the artist's roles on the stage, but her recital repertoire is represented only by lighter fare. It is not clear whether she appeared in *Der Freischütz* and *Lohengrin* or whether the arias from them were used for concerts. The records were all made in Berlin.

1284r-1296r June 1906 3575r-3581r 11 November 1907

10846l-10848l March 1908 12486u-12489u May 1910

Carmen-Air des cartes 3574r & *Lakmé*-Berceuse 3578r are not known to exist.

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