SYMPOSIUM RECORDS CD 1382

MARINA

Marina, an orphan (soprano) is brought up in a Catalan fishing village by the family of Jorge, a sea captain (tenor). She is secretly in love with him. Likewise, he is secretly in love with her. Alas, believing that he loves another, she accepts the proposal of Pasqual, a shipwright (bass). An old sea captain, Alberto (baritone) has sent Marina a letter. On learning of this Pasqual is racked with jealousy, though actually Alberto is giving Marina a letter from her dead father. There is a quarrel. It is resolved happily as the misunderstandings are seen for what they are and Marina and Jorge are united.

(PASCUAL JUAN) EMILIO ARRIETA Y CORERA (Puente la Reina, Navarre 1823-Madrid 1894) was the son of a country landowner. At ten, having lost his parents, he went to his sister in Madrid and was taught sight-reading by Castillo. He travelled to Italy on the small boat of some smugglers and under the patronage of Count de Litta he was able to study piano and harmony with Nicola Vaccai at the Milan Conservatoire from 1839 to 1845. Amilcare Ponchielli was a fellow student. He returned to Spain in 1846. He was befriended by Queen Isabel II and he became her singing teacher and court composer. In 1849 he was appointed director of the Teatro Real, and in 1857 professor and in 1868 director of the Conservatoire, Madrid, remaining there until his death. His pupils included Ruperto Chapí and Tomás Bréton. Arrieta's compositions are almost all for the stage and the influence of his Italian training is evident in many of them. The first, *Ildegonda*, had its première at La Scala in the last year of his studies. *La Conquista di Granada* and *Isabella la Católica* followed, being produced in Madrid in 1850 and 1855 respectively. His librettist for these was Temistocle Solera, author of five libretti for early works of Verdi. Arrieta went on to produce over fifty zarzuelas, of which *Marina* is the only one to have retained a regular place in the repertoire.
In 1871 Miguel Ramos Carrión revised the text and added recitatives, and the composer added a central section, thus turning it in to a three-act opera. This was for Enrico Tamberlik, who wished to sing the part of Jorge at the Royal Theatre.
(A zarzuela is an opéra bouffe, but in a strong Spanish idiom, playing for around an hour so that often several are given in one evening. Plots are usually comic, or tragic with comic aspects, and are often parodies of current events in the arts world. Thus the resemblance of the soprano's cadenza to the mad scene from *Lucia di Lammermoor* is surely intentional.)

MERCEDES (née Mercé) CAPSIR (Barcelona 1895-Suzzara, near Mantua, Italy 1969) was born at the same address as Maria Barrientos. Her parents sang in a Spanish touring company of her father's organising. She was trained in her home town by Bidai Neunei and made her début in 1914 as Gilda at the Teatro Liceo

there. After gaining experience in Madrid she sang in Buenos Aires and in Paris, and she was soon singing in Milan and Rome. She made her début at La Scala under Toscanini as Gilda in 1924 and remained there for ten years. Her career continued all over Europe with great success, but she never appeared in North America. She had a powerful voice capable of fine coloratura singing. She excelled in the music of Bellini, Rossini and Verdi, but she also sang Elsa (*Lohengrin*) and was in the première of Giordano's *Il Re.* She retired in 1949 and then taught at the Escuela Superior de Música, Barcelona.

HIPÓLITO LÁZARO [Barcelona 1887-Barcelona 1974] sang in a boys choir. He then scratched a living in various trades, but was too poor to complete his training with Carmen Bonaplata in Barcelona. Whilst on military service in the Moroccan War he played the saxophone in a military band and at Olot near Gerona in 1909 he made his début in Arrieta's *Marina.* Service over, he studied further in Rome under Ernesto Colli. As a protégé of Mascagni, he excelled in *Isabeau* and *Parisina* (1913), he soon achieved an enviable reputation. However, at the Metropolitan Opera, from 1918 to 1920, he was inevitably in the shadow of Caruso, except for *Norma*, in which the high tessitura suited him. He lived for thirty years in Cuba and appeared there as late as 1950. Lázaro thrilled audiences with the immense power and brilliance of his voice and perhaps it was this ability which led him sometimes to overlook that he could sing quietly with great beauty.

JOSÉ MARDONES né José Garcia de Mardonez y Ortiz de Pereda (Fonteca, near Alava 1868-Madrid 1932) was the son of a well-to-do farmer. After singing as a choirboy in Palencia cathedral he was refused entry at the Madrid Conservatoire as "totally without talent". His reaction was to teach himself, though later he had some lessons in Italy. He appeared in oratorio in Madrid, scoring a success in the première of Perosi's *Mosé* in 1890. In 1891 he appeared in opera in Buenos Aires and in Rio de Janiero and by the turn of the century he had sung in Lisbon and Madrid. Between 1909 and 1917 he was very popular in Boston and toured with the company, and he sang at the Metropolitan Opera from 1917 to 1926. Thereafter he sang in Spain. Toscanini chose him for the Verdi Requiem at the Verdi centenary celebrations of 1913. Coupled with a fine technique was a voice of beautiful timbre. He has been claimed to be the most powerful bass on record.

MARCOS REDONDO (Pozoblanco, Córdoba 1893-Barcelona 1976) lost his father when he was two and was brought up in Ciudad Real by relatives of his mother. After singing in the cathedral choir he entered a theological college, but left in 1913 to study composition under Tomás Bretón and singing at the Madrid Conservatoire. After a concert début at Madrid in 1915 he moved to Milan to study further. His opera début was in Madrid in 1919 as Germont père and in Barcelona his Tonio (*Pagliacci*) elicited high praise from Titta Ruffo. With a repertoire of twenty major roles he sang with great success in Cuba, France, Italy and Mexico, but above all he was acclaimed in Barcelona. At Seville in 1923 he created the part of Don Quichotte in de Falla's *Il Retablo de Maese Pedro*. For the next three decades he

was an enormously popular zarzuela singer. He continued also as a concert artist, appearances including a Mozart recital in Gibraltar and the "Choral" symphony with Victoria de los Angeles. He retired in 1957 and did some teaching, but devoted himself largely to his hobbies.

The transfers were made from immaculate original discs. The small amount of distortion which occurs at a few points is inherent in the original recording.

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

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