

## Tito Schipa - Arias & Scenes (1928)

Written by bluesever

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La Traviata: 1.1: *Un di felice* - Tito Schipa & Amelita Galli-Curci, 1928 1.2: *Ah, fors'è lui... Sempre libera*, Galli-Curci, 1919 1.3: *Dite alla giovine* - Galli-Curci, G. de Luca, 1927 1.4: *Addio del passato* - Galli-Curci 1.5: *Parigi o Cara* - Schipa, Galli-Curci, 1923

Rigoletto:

2.1: *Questa o quella* - Schipa, 1926 2.2: *Veglia o donna* - Galli-Curci, G. de Luca, 1927 2.3: *E il sol dell'anima* 2.4: *Caro Nome* - Galli-Curci 2.5: *Parmi veder le lagrime* - Schipa, 1928 2.6: *Tutte le feste al tempio* - Galli-Curci 2.7: *La donna è mobile*, 1925 2.8: *Piangi fanciulla...* - De Luca & Galli-Curci, 1918 2.9: *Oh mia Gilda... Lassu in cielo...* De Luca & Galli-Curci, 1918

Lucia di Lammermoor:

3.1: *Verrano a te (with Galli-Curci)*, 1928 3.2: *Ardon gli incensi... Spargi d'amaro pianto* 3.3: *Tu che a Dio...*

Don Pasquale:

4.1: *Tornami a dir (with Galli-Curci)*, 1924 4.2: *Tornami a dir (with Toti dal Monte)*, 1933 4.3: *Com'è gentile... / 4.4: Sogno soave e casto / Povero Ernesto... Cercherò lontana terra*, 1932

La Sonnambula:

5.1: *Come per me sereno... Sovra il sen.... Amelita Galli-Curci* 5.2: *Son geloso del zefiro errante*, 1923 5.3: *Prendi l'anel ti dono (with Toti dal Monte)*, 1933 5.4: *Ah! non credea... Ah, non giunge... Amelita Galli-Curci*

L'Elisir d'amore:

6.1: *Una furtiva lagrima / 6.2: Adina, credimi*, 1925 7: *L'Amico Fritz: Suzel, buon dì (with Mafalda Favero)* 8: *Tosca: Recondita armonia / E Lucevan le stelle* 9: *La Bohème: Che gelida manina / Sono andati (with Lucrezia Bori)*, 1925)

Werther:

10: *Oh! Natura* 10.1: *Pourquoi me reveiller*, 1925 10.2: *Ah! non mi ridestar*, 1934 10.3: *Selezione: Tito Schipa & Gianna Pederzini*, Roma, 1948

Manon:

11.1: *Acto II: Schipa, Sayao, Bonelli, S. Francisco*, 1937, Merola 11.2: *Il sogno*, 1926 11.3: *Dispar visión*, 1934 12: *Tosti: L'alba separa dalla luce l'ombra* 13: *Barbiere di Siviglia: Se il mio nome*, 1926 14: *Mignon: Addio / 15: Ah! non credevi tu* 16: *Martha: M'appari* 17: *L'arlesiana: E la solita storia*, 1928 18: *Luisa Miller: Quando le sere al placido* 19: *Core'grato*

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Raffaele Attilio Amedeo Schipa is born in Lecce, fourth in a modest family (his father Luigi is a custom officer) in the working-class neighbourhood called Le Scalze, last days of 1888, though recorded January 2, 1889 for conscription reasons.

His supernatural vocal gift is immediately noticed by his primary school teacher Giovanni Albani, then by all Lecce, which actually always considered him "propheta in patria". The arrival from Naples (1902) of bishop Gennaro Trama, real talent scout of those times, offers the young talent - whose nickname is now "Titu" (tiny) - the chance to enter the local Seminary, where he will study singing and composition. After a restless adolescence in his natal city - where he proves himself to be a promising performer and a tireless seducer - he follows the suggestion of his best teacher, Alceste Gerunda, and emigrates to Milan in order to perfect his technique with Emilio Piccoli and to seek occasion for a debut. He finds it (and of course must pay for it) in Vercelli, Piedmont, with *La Traviata* (Febr. 4, 1909).

His success is not an immediate one (the vocal personality of the young man is definitely unfamiliar to the average audience of those years) but his progression is regular and constant. After a long period of routine in the operatic touring company of Giuseppe Borboni, closed in Rome during the National Exposition of 1911, Naples presents him with his first triumph (1914). In a legendary *Tosca* conducted by Leopoldo Mugnone his stage-name "Tito Schipa" receives its consecration. The outstanding success brings him in Spain, where he learns immediately a perfect Spanish, consequent to a strong natural disposition to foreign languages. Actually he will fluently speak four, and will sing eleven, including native Australian; plus - as he used to say - the Neapolitan dialect...). This helps him to conquer the heart of Spanish people, first with a *Manon* at the Teatro Real in Madrid (1918) then all over the Spanish-speaking world. Nevertheless, growing the danger of submarines in World War I, young Schipa goes in trial against his artistic agency and succeeds in being dispensed from navigation till the final cease-fire.

1919 is the year of his arrival in the USA, invited there by the Scottish soprano Mary Garden and by "impresario" Cleofonte Campanini, both managers of the Civic Opera of Chicago. In New York Tito marries his first wife (1920), the French soubrette Antoinette Michel d'Ogoy ("Lily"), whom he had met in Montecarlo while performing in the world premiere of Puccini's *La Rondine*. Antoinette will give him two daughters, Elena and Liana.

*Rigoletto* is the title of his triumphal debut in Chicago (Dec. 4, 1919). This is the opening of an American adventure which will last 25 years. He's introduced by the press as Caruso's

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successor, but soon, due to his delicacy and grace, achieves his permanent success on totally different bases, as the so called "Anti-Caruso".

He sings 15 years as first tenor in Chicago Opera House, then at the Metropolitan of New York. He becomes one of the most famous and most rewarded singers ever. In the peculiar register of "tenore leggero" or "tenore di grazia" he's nowadays considered the best performer of all times. By means of a brilliant and tireless character and of a quick adaptation to the american way of life, he becomes a full time headliner in artistic, social and glamour chronicles, many of great importance, many of big danger...

He plans to write a jazz-opera (15 years before Gershwin). He explores the popular spanish and neapolitan repertoire with unmatched results for what concerns tenors (he works in team with first class authors like José Padilla or Richard Barthelemy); he becomes a star of the new born talking-pictures (*Vivere!* will be number 1 at the italian box-office for 1937, as well as Bixio's songs in the soundtrack: *Vivere e Torna piccina mia*); he compromises with Al Capone risking to be killed; he collects honours and awards, including the french Legion d'Honneur (1932); he goes from a romance to another with devastating consequences for his marriage; and most of all he earns unbelievable amounts of money wich he wastes and loses with the same obstinacy, being the favourite target of all kind of "stings".

During World War II he lives a long and intense love story with the italian actrice Caterina Boratto. This brings him back to Italy, and unfortunately to a dangerous involvment with the Fascist regime, whose hierarc Achille Starace is an old friend and countryman. After the war the America of McCarthy rejects him roughly, and so does the Italy of Teatro alla Scala. The work of self analysis and regeneration is long and hard, but in the mid 40's the mature Tito Schipa is ready to start a brand new career facing the raving audiences of the whole planet, missing only China and Japan. In 1944 he meets the italian starlet Teresa Borgna (Diana Prandi) and marries her in 1947, when Antoinette dies. Tito Jr. will be born from this marriage.

In 1956 he's invited to direct a singing school in Budapest. This is his first experience over the "iron curtain", culminating in the presidency of the jury in the first Youth Festival of Moscow (1957). His new simpathy for the russian public makes him a suspect for the italian secret services. His telephon is tapped and his project of a singing school in Italy sponsored by the government is succesfully boycotted. This time around he's accused of filocomunism, he falls victim of serious financial problems and is involved in tricky operations by some of his managers. Forced to go back to the USA, he finds there an unexpectedly warm welcome. The singing school is created in New York. While teaching there the diabetis causes his death (Dec. 16, 1965) at 77, after a 56 years career, definitely extraordinary for an operatic singer. Having

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specialized in a strictly limited repertoire (that was the secret of his incredible vocal longevity) Tito Schipa achieved the top level of his art in the leading roles of Massenet's Werther, Donizetti's L'Elisir d'Amore and Cilea's L'Arlesiana. In these operas he is, at present, unexcelled and probably unexcellible. ---Tito Schipa, Jr., titoschipa.it

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