



## Great Voices of the Opera (2011) CD2 - Rosa Ponselle

Written by bluesever

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These criticisms are often held as the reason for her early retirement; however, an additional factor may have been her fear of the soprano high C. An audible vocal crack during a performance of *Aida* in the mid-1920s contributed to a lack of confidence in singing that note. She never sang *Aida* again in New York although she did sing it on tour. She had sections of *Norma* and *La Traviata* transposed down in order to avoid the high C.

She made only two trips to Europe to sing in opera. Though both trips were a great success, she preferred to stay in the comfort and congeniality of the Metropolitan Opera. Annually, she toured the United States and Canada in concert and recital programs.

After her retirement, she married and moved to Baltimore where she was a driving force with the Baltimore Opera. She rarely left her home, the Villa Pace, after 1950. However, at her home, she was a coach to many great singers and was a generous hostess to young artists.

Ponselle's voice was a rich dramatic soprano, with great natural beauty. The range and technique were excellent and the tone was even throughout the entire range. Her repertoire ranged from Mozart to Mascagni, but surprisingly she never sang any Puccini or Wagner on stage, although their arias did figure in her concerts and recordings. Ponselle left many fine recordings including a series recorded in her home in 1954. The best are selections from *Norma* and from *La Forza del Destino*. Her "Ernani, involami" is justly famous, as are the arias from Spontini's *La Vestale*. Private recordings of her *Violetta* and *Carmen* from Metropolitan Opera broadcasts have been issued and allow for a view of her art in the context of a complete performance.

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