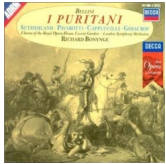


Vincenzo Bellini – I Puritani 1975 (Bonynge)



Disc: 1 1. *I Puritani: Act One: Scene 1: All'erta! All'erta! L'alba appari* - Cazzaniga 2. *I Puritani: Act One: Scene 1: O di Cromwell guerrieri* - Cazzaniga 3. *I Puritani: Act One: Scene 1: Or dove fuggo mai?* - Cappuccilli 4. *I Puritani: Act One: Scene 1: Ah! per sempre io ti perdei* - Cappuccilli 5. *I Puritani: Act One: Scene 2: O amato zio, o mio secondo padre!* - Sutherland 6. *I Puritani: Act One: Scene 2: Sai com' arde in petto mio* - Sutherland 7. *I Puritani: Act One: Scene 3: Ad Arturo onore* - Chorus of Royal Opera House 8. *I Puritani: Act One: Scene 3: A te, o cara* - Pavarotti 9. *I Puritani: Act One: Scene 3: Il rito augusto si compia senza me* - Luccardi 10. *I Puritani: Act One: Scene 3: Son vergin vezzosa* - Sutherland 11. *I Puritani: Act One: Scene 3: Ferma! Invan, invan rapir pretendi* – Cappuccilli

Disc: 2 1. *I Puritani: Act One: Scene 3: Dov'e Arturo?* - Sutherland 2. *I Puritani: Act One: Scene 3: Ma tu gia mi fuggi?* - Sutherland 3. *I Puritani: Act Two: Ah dolor! Ah terror!* - Chorus of Royal Opera House 4. *I Puritani: Act Two: Cinta di fiori* - Ghiaurov 5. *I Puritani: Act Two: E di morte lo stral non sara lento* - Cappuccilli 6. *I Puritani: Act Two: O rendetemi la speme* - Sutherland 7. *I Puritani: Act Two: Vien, diletto, e in ciel la luna!* - Sutherland 8. *I Puritani: Act Two: Il rival salvar tu dei* – Ghiaurov

Disc: 3 1. *I Puritani: Act Three: Son salvo, alfin son salvo* - Pavarotti 2. *I Puritani: Act Three: A una fonte afflitto e solo* - Sutherland 3. *I Puritani: Act Three: Fini... me lassa!* - Sutherland 4. *I Puritani: Act Three: Vieni, vieni fra queste braccia* - Pavarotti 5. *I Puritani: Act Three: Ancor s'ascolta questa suon molesto* - Pavarotti 6. *I Puritani: Act Three: Credeasi, misera!* - Pavarotti 7. *I Puritani: Act Three: Suon d'araldi?* - Chorus of Royal Opera House

Gian Carlo Luccardi, basse, Lord Gualtiero Walton Joan Sutherland, soprano, Elvira Nicolai Ghiaurov, basse, Sir Giorgio Walton Luciano Pavarotti, tenor, Lord Arturo Talbot Piero Cappuccilli, baryton, Sir Riccardo Forth Renato Cazzaniga, tenor, Sir Bruno Robertson Anita Caminada, mezzo-soprano, Enrichetta de France Covent Garden Chorus London Symphony Orchestra Richard Bonynge – conductor

This is the best overall rendition of Puritani, why isn't it available? Arguably Bellini's best score (Norma is admittedly more dramatic, but the melodies really soar in this work), this is the only recording to present it complete. As if that wasn't enough, you have a 'Puritani Quartet' that was pretty much unbeatable at the time (mid 70's). One wishes that the Met's cast from the period

(substitute Milnes for Capucilli) was used, but that's a quibble. After its initial appearance, this recording was a must have. Where did it go?

Callas' interpretation of Elvira was always considered classic, but her recording is sliced to ribbons. Here this score is not only complete, but Bonyngge restores the middle section of the soprano/tenor duet that Bellini removed prior to the Paris premiere (but had already shipped to Milan). Pavarotti sings the F in alt as written, and Sutherland sings the rondo finale with true abandon (She also sings this on her original recording. Sills was the only other soprano to record it, also unavailable.). Besides, Sutherland is magnificent here. The voice is not as fresh as her initial recording (which has been unavailable for ages), but she is more than a match for this music. So she isn't Callas. She's Sutherland, with an amazing technique combined with a achingly beautiful instrument and a real performing intelligence.

Pavarotti became an international sensation with this role (this is when he hit to covers of Time and Newsweek). No one has ever sung this role with more stunning results. The tessitura is brutal, but he makes it sound easy, with just enough effort to make it exciting.

If you find this recording, buy it. Bel Canto rarely sounded better. This is a work that you just float away on. I can't recommend this one enough. --- John R. Jaeger (Rochester, NY)

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