

Giacomo Puccini – La Rondine (1966)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 29 May 2011 08:59 - Last Updated Sunday, 23 March 2014 21:51

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CD1 1. La rondine: Act I: Ah! No! No! (Prunier, Magda, Lisette, Rambaldo) 2. La rondine: Act I: Chi il bel sogno di Doretta (Prunier, Magda) 3. La rondine: Act I: Chi il bel sogno di Doretta (Magda, Prunier) 4. La rondine: Act I: No, adesso non burlatemi (Magda, Rambaldo) 5. La rondine: Act I: La Doretta della mia fantasia (Prunier, Lisette, Rambaldo, Magda) [play](#) 6. La rondine: Act I: Denaro! Nient'altro che denaro! (Magda) 7. La rondine: Act I: Ore dolci e divine (Magda) 8. La rondine: Act I: E poi?; Basta. E finito. (Magda, Prunier) 9. La rondine: Act I: O mio giovine amico (Rambaldo, Ruggero, Prunier, Magda) 10. La rondine: Act I: Forse, come la rondine (Prunier, Magda, Rambaldo, Ruggero, Lisette) 11. La rondine: Act I: Forse, come la rondine (Magda, Prunier, Lisette) 12. La rondine: Act II: Fiori freschi! Fiori freschi! 13. La rondine: Act II: Chi e? Mai vista! (Magda) 14. La rondine: Act II: Scusatemi, scusate (Magda, Ruggero)

[play](#)

15. La rondine: Act II: Dolcessa! Ebbrezza! (Magda, Ruggero, Prunier, Lisette) 16. La rondine: Act II: Che caldo! Che sete! (Magda, Ruggero) 17. La rondine: Act II: Perché mai cercate di saper (Magda, Ruggero) 18. La rondine: Act II: Zitti! Non disturbiamoli! (Lisette, Prunier, Ruggero, Magda) 19. La rondine: Act II: Bevo al tuo fresco sorriso (Ruggero, Magda, Lisette, Prunier) 20. La rondine: Act II: Rambaldo!; Ah! M'aiutate! (Prunier, Magda, Lisette, Ruggero, Rambaldo) 21. La rondine: Act II: Nella trepida luce d'un mattin (Ruggero, Magda)

CD2

1. La rondine: Act III: Senti? Anche il mare respira somnesso (Magda, Ruggero) 2. La rondine: Act III: E siam fuggiti qui per nascondarlo! (Ruggero, Magda) 3. La rondine: Act III: Dimmi che vuoi seguirmi (Ruggero)

[play](#)

4. La rondine: Act III: Che più dirgli? Che fare? (Magda) 5. La rondine: Act III: E qui?; Non so! (Lisette, Prunier) 6. La rondine: Act III: Ma come voi? (Magda, Lisette, Prunier) 7. La rondine: Act III: Amore mio! Mia madre! (Ruggero, Magda)

Magda de Civry - Anna Moffo Ruggero Lastouc - Daniele Barioni Rambaldo Fernandez - Mario Sereni Lisette - Graziella Sciutti Prunier - Piero de Palma Yvette - Sylvia Bringham-Dimiziani Bianca - Virginia De Notaristefani Suzy - Franca Mattiucci Gobin - Fernando Jacopucci Périchaud - Mario Basiola II Maggiordomo - Robert El Hage RCA Italiana Orchestra and Chorus Francesco Molinari-Pradelli

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La rondine (The Swallow) is an opera in three acts by Giacomo Puccini to an Italian libretto by Giuseppe Adami, based on a libretto by Alfred Maria Willner and Heinz Reichert. It was first performed at the Grand Théâtre de Monte Carlo (or the Théâtre du Casino) in Monte Carlo on 27 March 1917.

Contrary to popular opinion, this was not the first complete commercial recording of LA RONDINE. There was a 1955 LP version on Columbia starring Eva de Luca, Giacinto Prandelli (still very much alive and extremely active on the lecture circuit in Europe as of this writing) and Ornella Rovero (who appears as Lisette on the 1958 DVD from VAI). Following this RCA recording were more famous ones starring Kiri Te Kanawa and Placido Domingo - which was well sung, showed advanced recording technology, but had zero personality - and the more recent reading by Gheorgiu and Alagna (which - the added tenor aria aside - was almost completely useless, being merely an advertising ploy by EMI to have the "Love Couple" sing everything). Additionally, there are live performances on CD, most notably starring Licia Albanese (sounding tentative and unrehearsed) and Cecilia Gasdia (who sounded pretty but bland).

It was this RCA version, recorded in July 1966, that has set the standard and will probably never be surpassed. Anna Moffo's luscious voice, combined with her complete understanding of and sympathy with the lead role of Magda is perfection. She was well suited to this role, at least, in the studio, and makes it seem far more than the usual distant cousin to LA TRAVIATA's Violetta. Nowhere is there the feeling that her rather small voice is getting lost in orchestra or during ensemble sections. Daniele Barioni brings more facets to Ruggero's personality than anyone before or since; Mario Sereni adds a humanity to the wealthy Rambaldo that makes the listener understand why Magda would return to him at the end of the opera. The second pair of lovers is interestingly cast. Graziella Sciutti's rather tart tone works better in the role of Lisette than almost any other part she sang, although she brought distinction to everything from FIDELIO's Marzelline to FIGARO's Susanna. It is a pleasure and a privilege to hear comprimario tenor Piero De Palma promoted to the leading role of poet Prunier, especially when it is handled with the relish and sensitivity displayed here. Francesco Molinari-Pradelli's conducting shows real intelligence, avoiding the deliberate tempo changes that most conductors exaggerate when leading this work.

Let's not forget the music itself. Even when it is performed in a less than perfect fashion (it

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requires a tremendous amount of precision in its detail for principals, chorus and orchestra), it is an intensely moving experience. Handled the way it is on this recording, it could melt the heart of a stone. While the third act has always been somewhat of a letdown after the brilliance of the preceding two, the artistry evidenced here makes the characters' decisions seem far less contrived. This is a recording that deserves to be treated with the same reverence as is paid to the 1953 recording of TOSCA (with Callas, di Stefano, Gobbi and De Sabata conducting). Bravo to all concerned: this is an achievement that will hopefully be enjoyed by many, many generations to come. ---A. Scott

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