Giuseppe Verdi – II Corsaro (2005)



CD1

- 1. Il Corsaro Prelude New Philharmonia Orchestra 2:43
- 2. Il Corsaro Act 1 "Come liberi volano i venti" The Ambrosian Singers 1:23
- 3. Il Corsaro Act 1 "Ah! sì, ben dite.." "Tutto parea sorridere" "Del- la brezza col favore"
- 4. Il Corsaro Act 1 "Si: de'corsari il fulmine" José Carreras 2:37
- 5. Il Corsaro Act 1 "Egli non riede ancora!" Jessye Norman 1:55
- 6. Il Corsaro Act 1 "Non so le tetre immagini" Jessye Norman 3:32 play
- 7. Il Corsaro Act 1 "E pur tristo, o Medora" José Carreras 1:44
- 8. Il Corsaro Act 1 "No, tu non sai comprendere" "Tornerai, ma forse spenta" Jessye Norman 6:16
- 9. Il Corsaro Act 2 "Oh qual perenne gaudio t'aspetta" The Ambrosian Singers 1:50
- 10. Il Corsaro Act 2 "Né sulla terra creatura alcuna" "Vola talor dal carcere" -
- "Seide celebra non gioia e festa" Montserrat Caballé 4:28
- 11. Il Corsaro Act 2 "Ah conforto è sol la speme" Montserrat Caballé 2:55
- 12. Il Corsaro Act 2 "Sol grida di festa" "O prodi miei, sorgete" The Ambrosian Singers 1:30
- 13. Il Corsaro Act 2 "Salve, Allah!" Gian-Piero Mastromei 2:34
- 14. Il Corsaro Act 2 "Giunge un Dervis" "Di': que'ribaldi tremano" José Carreras 2:54
- 15. Il Corsaro Act 2 "Resta ancora" Alexander Oliver 3:38
- 16. Il Corsaro Act 2 "Audace cotanto mostrarti pur sai?" Gian-Piero Mastromei 3:00
- 17. Il Corsaro Act 2 "Signor, trafitti giaconno" John Noble 4:18

CD2

- 1. Il Corsaro Act 3 "Alfin questo corsaro è mio prigione!" Gian-Piero Mastromei 2:02
- 2. Il Corsaro Act 3 "Cento leggiadre vergini" "Ma togliam dall'anima" Gian-Piero Mastromei 3:26
- 3. Il Corsaro Act 3 "S'avvicina il tuo momento" Gian-Piero Mastromei 2:17
- 4. Il Corsaro Act 3 "Eccola!...fingasi." "Sia l'istante maledetto" Gian-Piero Mastromei 4:56
- 5. Il Corsaro Act 3 "Eccomi prigionero!" José Carreras 4:30
- 6. Il Corsaro Act 3 "Ei dorme?" Montserrat Caballé 1:46
- 7. Il Corsaro Act 3 "Seid la vuole" "Non sai tu che sulla testa" Montserrat Caballé 6:39
- 8. Il Corsaro Act 3 "Sul capo mio discenda" José Carreras 2:26
- 9. Il Corsaro Act 3 "La terra, il ciel m'abborino..." Montserrat Caballé 2:16
- 10. Il Corsaro Act 3 "Voi tacete..." Jessye Norman 4:14
- 11. Il Corsaro Act 3 "Per me infelice" José Carreras 3:29

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12. Il Corsaro - Act 3 - "O mio Corrado, appressati" Jessye Norman 3:55 play

- * Clifford Grant (Bass)
- * Gianpiero Mastromei (Voice)
- * John Noble (Baritone)
- * Jessye Norman (Soprano)
- * Alexander Oliver (Tenor)
- * Montserrat Caballé (Soprano)
- * José Carreras (Tenor)

New Philharmonia Orchestra

Lamberto Gardelli - conductor

Verdi actually began Il Corsaro (The Pirate) before I Masnadieri, which premiered over a year before Il Corsaro. He had considered the subject for the Venice Carnival season of 1844, but this was abandoned. He next planned to composed the work to fulfill an obligation to Her Majesty's Theatre, in London, asking Francesco Maria Piave to complete a libretto, based on Lord Byron's poem, The Corsair. This, however, was postponed and eventually replaced with I Masnadieri. Finally, Verdi set Il Corsaro to complete the terms of his contract with publisher Francesco Lucca, with whom Verdi had a less-than-friendly relationship.

Thus, when Verdi began work in earnest on the music of Il Corsaro, the libretto was already several years old. Furthermore, it is clear the success of the piece was of no great concern to him, for he had nothing to do with preparations for the premiere, did not direct the opera and failed to attend the first performance, on October 25, 1848, at the Teatro Grande in Trieste. Reviews of the performance were all negative; the opera ran for only three nights.

That the text and dramatic flow of II Corsaro was in place before Verdi began Macbeth is clear in the former's comparative lack of cohesion and its old-fashioned writing. The opening Prelude contains tunes from the ensuing drama and begins with a stormy section that melts into lyrical passages before the curtain rises. As in Verdi's first few operas, a chorus, this time of pirates, begins the first act and also joins Corrado, the primo tenore, on the last few lines of his cabaletta, "Si, de' Corsari il fulmine," for which Verdi borrows from Carlo's cabaletta in I Masnadieri. Corrado and Medora close the act with a duet that is conventional in the contrast between the two parts in the lyrical first half and the parallel singing in the faster cabaletta section.

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Verdi opens the second act with another chorus followed by a cavatina, this one, with more daring harmonies, introducing Gulnara. This scene, as well as the harem setting, was conceived by Piave and Verdi and is not in Byron's poem. The first scene of Act III is, belatedly, the "entrance" double aria of Seid, Pasha of Coron, whom we have already encountered in a duet with Corrado in the second act. Filled with contrasting meters and developing melodies, Seid's double aria is one of the high points of the opera, the reprise of the primary melody occurring in the orchestra. Later we hear a duet for Gulnara and Seid that looks ahead to Verdi's later work in its somewhat free text declamation over a melodically unified orchestra accompaniment. Also noteworthy is the return of the stormy music from the Prelude in the second scene of Act III, after which Gulnara announces Seid's death. Verdi creates closure by returning to melodies from the Prelude near the end of the opera, just before Medora dies and Corrado throws himself from a cliff. ---John Palmer, Rovi

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