

VERDI: OTELO

Ramón Vinay (Otello) · Herva Nellì (Desdemona)
Giuseppe Valdengo (Iago) · Virginio Assandri (Cassio)
Leslie Chabray (Roderigo) · Nicola Moscon (Lodovico)
Arthur Newman (Montano) · Nan Merriman (Emilia)
The NBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus
conducted by **Arturo Toscanini**

TOSCANINI

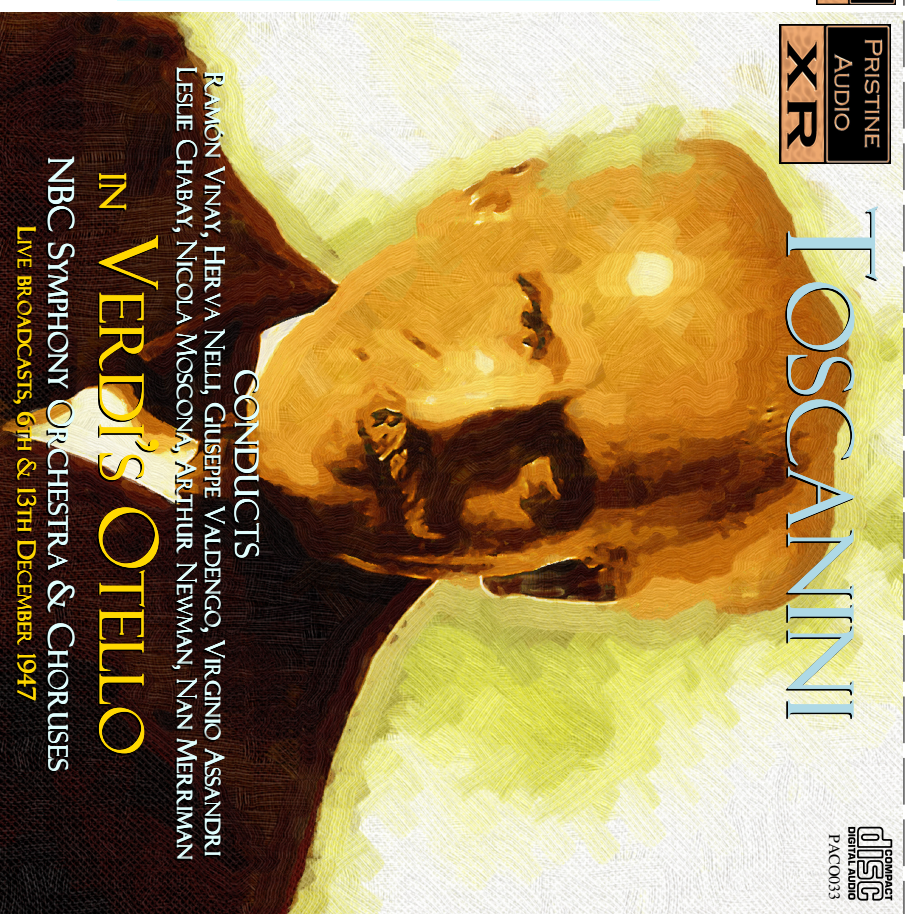
Disc One	
1 Radio introduction - Broadcast 1 (2:06)	
2 Act 1: Una Vela! (4:16)	
3 Esultate! (2:20)	
4 Roderigo! Ebben, che pensi? (2:24)	
5 Fuoco di gioia! (2:42)	
6 Roderigo, bevi! (1:28)	
7 Insuffia l'ugola! (3:37)	
8 Capitano, vattende! (1:22)	
9 Olà che avviene? (2:55)	
10 Già nella notte (5:08)	
11 Venga la morte! (3:38)	
12 Applause and radio commentary (0:55)	
13 Act 2: Non ti cruciar (2:46)	
14 Credo in un Dio crude! (5:18)	
15 Cio m'accora (4:53)	
16 Dove guardi splendono (3:56)	
17 Dun uom che geme sotto il tuo disdegno (4:39)	
18 Desdemona rea! (1:40)	
19 Ora e per sempre addio sane memorie (3:32)	
20 Era la notte (3:16)	
21 Ah! Mille vite gli donasse Iddio! (0:40)	
22 Sì, pel ciel marmoreo giuro! (2:22)	
23 Applause and radio sign-off (3:27)	

Disc Two	
1 Radio introduction - Broadcast 2 (0:20)	
2 Act 3: La vedetta del porto ha segnalato (2:23)	
3 Dio ti giocondi, o sposo dell'alma mia sovrano (4:09)	
4 Esterrefatta fissa lo sguardo tuo tremendo (4:46)	
5 Dio! mi potevi scagliar tutti i mali (3:42)	
6 Vieni, Paula e deserta (0:43)	
7 E intanto, giacche non si stanca (4:07)	
8 Quest'è il segnale che annuncia (2:28)	
9 Il Doge ed il Senato (2:49)	
10 Messeri! Il Doge (1:34)	
11 A terra! sì, nel livido (5:40)	
12 Tutti fuggite Otello! (2:03)	
13 Applause and radio commentary (1:44)	
14 Act 4: Era più calmo? (3:26)	
15 Mia madre aveva una povera ancella (6:21)	
16 Chi è là? Otello? (5:14)	
17 Calma come la tomba (3:06)	
18 Niun mi tema (4:33)	
19 Applause and radio sign-off (3:10)	

Broadcast 1: 6th December, 1947
Broadcast 2: 13th December, 1947
Studio 8H, NBC Radio City, New York

XR remastering from various sources by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, August 2009
Cover artwork based on a photograph of Arturo Toscanini
Total duration: 2 hrs 15 min 58 sec ©2009 Pristine Audio.

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VERDI: OTELLO

CONDUCTED BY ARTURO TOSCANINI

COMPACT
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VERDI: OTELLO
TOSCANINI, NBC SO, SOLOISTS

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Otello is an opera in four acts by Giuseppe Verdi to an Italian libretto by Arrigo Boito, based on Shakespeare's play *Othello*. It was Verdi's second to last opera and is considered by many to be his greatest. It was first performed at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan, on February 5, 1887.

Most commentators and musicologists consider *Otello* to be Verdi's greatest, most mature opera. In it, he tried to do away with the traditional recitative-aria structure of opera, much as Richard Wagner had done, except that in some cases, the distinction between recitative and aria is more clearcut in *Otello* than in any of Wagner's operas. Nonetheless, the flow between the set pieces is much smoother than in any of Verdi's earlier works. Verdi's librettist, Arrigo Boito, was extremely faithful to Shakespeare's original play, though Act 1 of the drama (everything having to do with Brabantio, Desdemona's father) was omitted and the other scenes were condensed in length. The roles of Otello (Othello) and Iago are among the most fully developed in all of opera, as much so as in Shakespeare's original drama - especially the character of Otello himself. (Iago is much more a standard villain in the opera than in the play). Verdi's orchestral writing in *Otello* is more highly developed than in any of Verdi's previous masterpieces. Whereas in the orchestra served as little more than an accompaniment to the singing in his earlier works, in *Otello*, the orchestra plays a major part in conveying the events of the opera. It is used to portray the depth of the evil of Iago (an evil possibly only rivaled by that of Scarpia in Puccini's *Tosca*).

Otello has been recorded complete on disc and film a number of times since the Second World War; but most music-guide reviewers contend that a recording made of a 1947 radio broadcast of the opera, conducted with thrilling verve and precision by Arturo Toscanini and featuring such solid singers as Herva Nelli, Ramón Vinay and Giuseppe Valdengo, is musically (if not in terms of sound quality) the best of these versions. The Toscanini account has been released on commercial LPs and on CD in a digitally remastered form. In addition, exciting performances of *Otello* were captured live as early as the 1920s and '30s at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and at the Metropolitan Opera (the latter via the Metropolitan Opera radio broadcasts). They, too, are available on CD reissues. A wide variety of stage performances dating from the 1950s onwards are also to be had on CD or on DVD.

Individual arias, duets and scenes from *Otello* have been committed to disc by many celebrated tenors, baritones and sopranos since acceptable audio technology was first developed in the early 1900s. The best of these recorded extracts have been reissued on CD and make for fascinating comparative listening.

As the above notes from Wikipedia make clear, this recording, which dates from the era just prior to the widespread adoption of tape recording in both broadcast and recording studio environments, is widely regarded as the best recorded version of Verdi's *Otello*, and a number of requests for an XR-remastered version of the recording have prompted me to tackle its restoration. In doing so I have been supplied by a number of sources from various avid Toscanini collectors, and have endeavoured to select from these the best available recording of each section of the opera. These have then been blended together to form what I hope is a reasonably sonically seamless rendition of the entire opera, taken solely from the two broadcast performances. At all times the primary goal was maximum sound quality, and I am convinced that this release has succeeded in making great sonic advances over all previous issues, both on LP and CD. - *Andrew Rose*

NOTES FROM WIKIPEDIA AND BY ANDREW ROSE - FURTHER NOTES ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM