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Callas

Lucia di Lammermoor

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THE CAST

Lucia - **Maria Callas**
Edgardo - **Giuseppe Di Stefano**
Enrico - **Tito Gobbi**
Raimondo - **Raffaele Arié**
Arturo - **Valiano Natali**
Alisa - **Anna Maria Canali**
Normanno - **Gino Sarri**

"And now comes the great moment, the Mad Scene... Callas's impersonation ... is filled with the deepest pathos (as in her singing of "*Alfin son tua*", in the section beginning "*Ardon gli incensi*", which is quite unforgettable) and it has an impulsive, excitable note in it that conveys the derangement of the poor girl's mind. With all this goes the most superb vocalisation. In the cadenza before *Spargi d'amaro*, Callas knocks the flute out and we hear him only as a little timid tootle in the background. Here is certainly some of the finest singing of our time..." *The Gramophone*, March 1954

Transfer notes

This recording of *Lucia di Lammermoor* was Maria Callas's first for EMI, and one of very few of those classic 1950s EMI opera recordings not made in Milan with the orchestra and chorus of La Scala. It was her second full opera recording, and only her third official studio recording session. Despite some major cuts in the score, it was hailed on its release, with A.R. writing not only praise for Callas in his review in *The Gramophone*: "Much credit is due to Tullio Serafin for his admirable direction of the opera and to the engineers for a most excellent recording".

From a technical perspective the original recording is interesting. Despite at times being apparently unrelentingly dry, occasionally we do get a sense of space and acoustic. Equalisation favours clarity of voice above all, and there is a real lack of depth in the sound (and, it turns out, a lot of murk and muck in the lower registers). Working on these two areas in particular rounds out the sound of the male voices in particular, making their previous incarnations sound somewhat impotent, as well as giving the orchestra a far more convincing presence. But of course it is Callas who shines here, and with the slightest cushioning of real opera house acoustics (in this case I found the Sydney Opera House to offer the most accommodating sound without sacrificing the clarity of the original recording) she sounds more ravishing than ever.

A quick note about the early Callas recordings: in cleaning these up I discovered low-pitched 50Hz mains hum which suggested an unusually high orchestral pitch (A4= ~460Hz) running throughout the three direct-to-disc 78rpm sessions. Repitching the recordings from standard 440Hz by using this reference immediately relieved them of an unusual heaviness of voice and sounded very convincing. Despite this remarkable degree of sharpness I elected to believe that what my measurements and ears were telling me was indeed correct. **AR**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
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GAETANO DONIZETTI

Lucia
di Lammermoor

Maria Callas

Giuseppe Di Stefano
Tito Gobbi
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Gino Sarri

Orchestra and Chorus of the
Florence 'Maggio Musicale'
Chorus Master Andrea Morosini
Conductor Tullio Serafin

Studio recording, Florence, 1953

Plus Maria Callas's first
studio recordings, Turin 1949

XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

Cover artwork based on a photograph
of **Maria Callas** as Lucia, La Scala, 1954

Gaetano Donizetti

LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

Text: **Salvatore Cammarano**

Recorded 29, 30 January and 1, 3, 4, 6 February
1953

Teatro Comunale, Florence

Producer: **Dino Olivieri**

Engineers: **Oswaldo Vareso, David Pickett**

Catalogue number Columbia 33 CX 1431/2

Turin Recording Sessions:

Tristan und Isolde

Recorded 8 November 1949

Matrix Nos 71294-2, 71295

Catalogue number Cetra CB.20481

Norma

Recorded 9 November 1949

Matrix Nos 71296, 71297-2

Catalogue number Cetra CB.20482

I Puritani

Recorded 10 November 1949

Matrix Nos 71298, 71299

Catalogue number Cetra CB.20483

Total duration: **2hr 12:58**

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Donizetti Lucia di Lammermoor

DISC 1: ACT 1

1. Prelude and Opening Chorus (7:44)
2. Cruda, funesta smania (6:06)
3. Regnava nel silenzio (12:06)
4. Slla tomba che rinserra (12:03)

ACT 2

5. Lucia fra poco a te verrà (3:09)
6. Il pallor fuesto, orrendo (11:43)
7. Per poco fra le tenebre (3:37)
8. Chi mi frena in tal momento (7:40)
9. T'allontana, sciagurato (4:35)

DISC 2: ACT 3

12. D'immenso giubilo (1:45)
13. Dalle stanze, ove Lucia (6:06)
14. Alfin son tua (15:59)
16. Fra poco a me ricovero (17:05)

Chorus & Orchestra of Maggio Musicale, Florence

Tullio Serafin

NB. Track markers follow the numbers in the scores and the names of the principal arias within those numbers as indicated in the vocal score.

Callas First Recording Sessions

5. WAGNER Tristan und Isolde - *Dolce e calmo* (7:26)
6. BELLINI Norma - *Casta Diva* (6:42)
7. BELLINI Norma - *Ah! Bello a me ritorna* (2:12)
8. BELLINI I Puritani - *O rendetemi la speme* (1:03)
9. BELLINI I Puritani - *Qui la voce sua soave* (3:38)
10. BELLINI I Puritani - *Vien diletto, è in ciel la luna* (2:19)

Orchestra Sinfonica di Torino della RAI Arturo Basile