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PACO 110

TOSCANINI CONDUCTS PUCCINI *La Bohème: 50th Anniversary Concerts*

Pristine
XR

In the present recording the orchestral detail comes out with a clarity that reveals Puccini's masterly scoring as never before and leaves one stunned with admiration for Toscanini's wonderful handling of it. The music is vibrant with life from start to finish and though the tempi may sometimes sound rather too quick—for example just after Mimi's entrance—one is irresistibly carried away by the rhythmic vitality put into the music. Toscanini has his own ideas about *allargando* and *rallentando*, but if one turns to the score and really considers the context he will be found to be right almost every time ... the great conductor has inspired the artists to give of their best and himself contributes a performance which thrilled and excited me so much that I had to go into the garden and cool down before writing this review.

A.R., The Gramophone, November 1953 - review of UK HMV LP issue (excerpt)

As I have alluded, there is one problem with the Toscanini *Bohème*, and that is its sound. The acoustics of Studio 8-H and the incompetence of the RCA engineers of the time have left us with a hard dry sound that no modern wizardry will repair. This new incarnation on CD is probably as good as it will ever be. But can it serve as a first choice? The listener will have to decide to what extent sound is a factor in its selection. For those who cannot abide antiquated sound, there are several attractive performances in stereo, such as Serafin's excellent 1958 recording that boasts the strongest cast of all: Tebaldi, Bergonzi, Bastianini, Siepi, Corena, and D'Angelo, making it perhaps the best of the modern recordings. I remain confident, however, that even Serafin's version, along with every other that has been made or will be made in the future, will be reduced to fighting it out for the number two position. Number one will remain, unassailably, Arturo Toscanini's.

James Camner, Fanfare, July/August 1991 - review of RCA CD issue (excerpt)

Producer's Note

The legendary Toscanini 50th anniversary performance of *La Bohème* - the only recording of a Puccini opera by the conductor of its première - rightly holds a place as one of the most important live operatic recordings of the 20th century. In this XR remastering I have worked on multiple aspects of the sound. XR balancing brings immediate and huge improvements to the general sound quality; convolution reverberation, exceptionally gently applied, gives the sense of the genuine opera hall to the acoustic; Capstan pitch stabilisation corrects the wow that plagued earlier transfers; careful restoration and remastering have dealt with multiple minor flaws and irritations. Finally the restoration of radio announcements brings an extra sense of occasion to these historic broadcasts. (These have been edited to exclude excess sponsor promotion, and have had the interval talks excised.) The restoration of the rapturous applause not heard on RCA's releases likewise feels appropriate with these magnificent performances. This is a very special recording indeed - never has it sounded anywhere near so good. **Andrew Rose**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
SARL Pristine Audio, 144 Rue de l'Eglise, 24610 St. Méard de Gurçon, France

Toscanini • Puccini *La Bohème* Fiftieth anniversary performance

Pristine
XR
PACO 110



Licia Albanese (Soprano), Jan Peerce (Tenor)
Anne McKnight (Soprano), Frank Valentino (Baritone),
Nicola Moscona (Bass), George Cehanovsky (Baritone), Salvatore Baccaloni (Bass)

NBC Symphony Chorus, NBC Symphony Orchestra
conductr Arturo Toscanini

Live broadcast recordings, 1946

Puccini *La Bohème*

Disc One

- 1 Introduction to Part One (1:40)
- 2 Act 1 - Questo mar rosso (4:03)
- 3 Pensier profondo! (1:05)
- 4 Abbasso, abbasso l'autor! (3:41)
- 5 Si può? (4:11)
- 6 Al Quartiere Latin (1:41)
- 7 Non sono in vena (3:25)
- 8 Che gelida manina! (4:19)
- 9 Sì. Mi chiamano Mimì (4:58)
- 10 O soave fanciulla (3:52)
- 11 Act 2 - Aranci, datterì! (2:44)
- 12 Chi guardi? (4:57)
- 13 Bevi. Ch'io beva del tossico! (2:59)
- 14 Quando men' vo (4:10)
- 15 Chi l'ha richiesto? (2:12)
- 16 Back announcement to Part One (1:27)

Disc Two

- 1 Introduction to Part Two (1:46)
- 2 Act 3 - Ohè, là, le guardie (4:45)
- 3 Mimì?! Speravo di trovarvi qui (4:05)
- 4 Marcello, Finalmente (1:29)
- 5 Mimì è una civetta (3:31)
- 6 D'onde lieta uscì al tuo grido d'amore (2:41)
- 7 Dunque è proprio finita? (4:54)
- 8 Act 4 - In un coupé? (1:11)
- 9 O Mimì, tu più non torni (2:21)
- 10 Che ora sia? (3:53)
- 11 C'è Mimì (4:53)
- 12 Vecchia zimarra, senti (1:20)
- 13 Schaunard, ognuno der diversa via (1:39)
- 14 Sono andanti? (4:15)
- 15 Oh Dio? Mimì! (5:17)
- 16 Back announcement to Part Two (2:04)

CAST

Mimì - Licia Albanese
Rodolfo - Jan Pearce
Marcello - Francesco Valentino
Musetta - Anne McKnight
Schaunard - George Cehanovsky
Colline - Nicola Moscona
Benoît/Alcindoro - Salvatore Baccaloni

Peter J. Wilhousky - chorus director
Eduardo Petri - boys chorus director

NBC Symphony Chorus & Orchestra
Arturo Toscanini, conductor

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a photograph of
Puccini and Toscanini, New York, 1910

Broadcast 3 & 10 February 1946,
from NBC Studio 8H, New York City
Announcer: Ben Grauer

Total duration: 1hr 41:34



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