

Giordano - Andrea Chénier
DEL MONACO - MILANOV - WARREN

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The Met revealed its brand-new production of Umberto Giordano's lusty opera, "Andrea Chénier," last night and left little doubt that the French Revolution really had been conducted in Italy. This handsome, vigorous revival of a work that has been off the Met boards from 23 years should be one of the hits of the season, and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller Jr., who put up the money for it, should be enormously pleased with herself this morning.

With the robust singing voices of Zinka Milanov, Leonard Warren, and Mario Del Monaco giving their all in the central roles, spirited conducting by Fausto Cleva, arresting and towering new scenery by Frederick Fox and excellent staging by Dino Yannopoulos, the thing couldn't miss.

This is not one of the company's fancy and fussy restorations, of which we have several examples over recent years. As a matter of fact, the whole show, despite its newness, looks smooth and seasoned. Even Fox's immense sets (it took half an hour to change them between acts) have a substantial and used (not worn) appearance, as if they might have been lived in for years. A word here, too, for his costumes, which are properly handsome for the aristocracy and properly drab for the revolutionaries.

The music, the singing and the playing are overwhelming in this production, and not the trappings, despite their magnificence. For Giordano's score is most ingratiating. It has some of the sweep of Verdi and some of the lyric charm of Puccini, without possessing the genius of either. Its weakness lies in its lack of clear definition; but it is charming, all the same.

Warren, playing the revolutionary, Gerard, was the triumphant performer last night, singing with artistry and fervor, and he won a well-deserved ovation from the audience for his role in the tribunal scene. Zinka Milanov sang beautifully, too, as Maddalena, and did a spellbinding job in the duet that closes the opera. As for Del Monaco - well, here is a young tenor with drive and a sure-fire stage personality and he made an exciting Chénier with his strong top tones and decisive acting. His singing is, for the most part, rough but compelling.

Del Monaco, by the way, appeared to be the only principal with a claque last night. It began hollering right in the middle of his big first-act aria and stopped the show when this aria was finished. But Rudolf Bing has apparently had enough of this sort of thing and permitted no solo curtain calls at the ends of the acts. It was Milanov, Warren, and Del Monaco, hand in hand, each and every time.

In lesser roles, Herta Glaz, Salvatore Baccaloni, Rosalind Elias, and Alessio De Paolis all gave finished performances and although his singing abilities could scarcely be judged from his brief appearance, Louis Sgarro, making his debut with the company, carried himself impressively as a major-domo.

Douglas Watts, *The New York News*, November 16, 1954

Producer's Note

The source recordings for this magnificent live performance of Giordano's *Andrea Chénier* were well preserved tapes of the live radio broadcast of 4 December, 1954. It was the first time the Met broadcast this opera, and they have three of the best soloists. Zinka Milanov is just assuming a role that she would keep until her retirement, and it's generally quite kind to the soprano; Mario Del Monaco in the title role has all the swagger and gleaming top notes that these verismo operas need; Leonard Warren is an excellent Gerard. Light editing and fading of applause and incomplete commentaries suggest a high quality dub of an excellent original FM tape recording. If the sound of the original was at times a little coarse and thin, this has been much improved in this XR remastering, which has revealed a depth and warmth hitherto lacking, as well as taming some harsh upper frequencies. I've also been able to reduce and eliminate some quite prominent wow and flutter heard on the source tapes. **Andrew Rose**

MARIO DEL MONACO as *Andrea Chénier*

by Umberto Giordano

Mario Del Monaco
Zinka Milanov
Leonard Warren

Rosalind Elias

Hertha Glaz

Gabor Carelli

George Cehanovsky

Alessio De Paolis

Frank Valentino

Salvatore Baccaloni

Sandra Warfield

Osie Hawkins

Norman Scott

Lawrence Davidson

Louis Sgarro

Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra
Fausto Cleva conductor

Live broadcast performance - full stage recording 1954

PACO 128

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GIORDANO ANDREA CHÉNIER
DEL MONACO, MILANOV, WARREN, MET OPERA, CLEVA

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

PACO 128

CAST

Andrea Chénier - Mario Del Monaco
Maddalena - Zinka Milanov
Carlo Gérard - Leonard Warren
Bersi - Rosalind Elias
Countess di Coigny - Hertha Glaz
Abbé - Gabor Carelli
Fléville - George Cehanovsky
L'Incredibile - Alessio De Paolis
Roucher - Frank Valentino
Mathieu - Salvatore Baccaloni
Madelon - Sandra Warfield
Dumas - Osie Hawkins
Fouquier Tinville - Norman Scott
Schmidt - Lawrence Davidson
Major-domo - Louis Sgarro

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of Mario del Monaco as
Andrea Chénier, Philadelphia, 1954

Broadcast matinée performance
4 December, 1954, Metropolitan Opera
House, New York City

Total duration: 1hr 48:25

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GIORDANO Andrea Chénier

CD 1

- 1 Act I - Questo azzurro sofa la colachiam (13:39)
- 2 O pastorelle, addio! (2:02)
- 3 Signor Chenier? (0:36)
- 4 Al mio dire perdono (2:38)
- 5 Un di all'azzurro spazio (4:21)
- 6 Perdonatemi! (4:48)
- 7 Act II - Per l'ex inferno! (1:19)
- 8 Temer? Perche? (3:08)
- 9 Credo a una possanza arcana (4:56)
- 10 Vedi? Dal ponte Perronet s'agglomera la folla (6:36)
- 11 Ecco l'altare (3:00)
- 12 Eravate possente, io invece minacciata (2:22)
- 13 Ora soave, sublime ora d'amore (4:26)

CD 2

- 1 Act III - Dumouriez traditore e giacobino (4:49)
- 2 Predi, e un ricordo! (4:33)
- 3 Amici, ancor cantiam! Beviam! Danziam ognor! (0:44)
- 4 L'uccello e nella rete! (3:26)
- 5 Nemico della Patria! (6:31)
- 6 Carlo Gerard - La! Entrate! (4:11)
- 7 Come sa amare! (6:01)
- 8 Perduto! La mia vita per salvarlo! (5:00)
- 9 Sì, fui soldato (5:09)
- 10 Act IV - Cittadino, men duol, ma e tardi assai (1:23)
- 11 Come un bel dì di maggio (6:05)
- 12 Vicino a te s'acqueta (6:43)

Orchestra and Chorus of the Metropolitan Opera
Fausto Cleva, conductor