



Richard Strauss

Der Rosenkavalier



Richard Strauss undoubtedly had a life-long love affair with the female voice. All his best operatic roles are written for women and nowhere is this more apparent than in *Der Rosenkavalier*. The opera features excellent parts for no less than three different types of female voice: light soprano (Sophie), mezzo-soprano (Octavian) and mature lyric soprano (Marschallin). When EMI producer Walter Legge decided to record *Der Rosenkavalier* the easiest choice he had to make was casting his wife, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, as the Marschallin. Schwarzkopf sang Sophie at Covent Garden and elsewhere in the late 1940s, but it was the Marschallin that would become her signature role. The role requires a mature singer able to convey the huge emotional range of the part using both the music and the words. Schwarzkopf was a renowned lieder singer and puts this experience to full use. Her voice has just the right combination of weight and lyricism to convey all of the emotion felt by the character as she accepts the loss of her youth.

A young Christa Ludwig sings Octavian with verve. Ludwig would go on to be lauded as one of the greatest mezzos of her time, singing far more than the usual range of roles. In addition to the ones you would expect (Carmen, Fricka, Waltraute, Ortrud, Brangäne, Cherubino), she mastered some parts more normally associated with dramatic sopranos including Fidelio, Kundry and the Dyer's Wife. Teresa Stich-Randall sings the youthful Sophie, bringing a lovely vocal purity to the role. The American soprano burst onto the musical scene as Nanetta in Toscanini's broadcast of Falstaff in 1950 but bulk of her future career would be in Europe. Stich-Randall made few studio recordings and only this *Rosenkavalier* has remained consistently in the catalogue. Austrian bass Otto Edelmann sings Ochs and is careful not to overact the part. It is easy to go too far in the characterisation of Ochs but Edelman offers us a slightly more restrained performance that works very well. Edelmann sang Hans Sachs at the re-opening of the Bayreuth festival in 1951, repeating the role at the Metropolitan Opera where he also sang Wotan, Gurnemanz and Ochs to great acclaim.

Founded by Walter Legge in 1945 the Philharmonia was regarded as the finest of all the London Orchestras in the 1950s. Having worked with the orchestra on several previous occasions (this recording was one of several operas that Karajan made with EMI in the mid-1950s with Schwarzkopf and the Philharmonia) Karajan arrived at very first recording session and proceeded to record the opening of the opera without any rehearsal, capturing the freshness of a live performance in a studio environment. This recording of *Der Rosenkavalier* remains one of the best ever committed to disc.

strauss
der rosenkavalier

Pristine XR
PACO 167
CD 1 & 2

elisabeth schwarzkopf
christa ludwig
teresa stich-randall
otto edelmann
eberhard wächter
ljuba welitsch
paul kuen
kerstin meyer
nicolai gedda

philharmonia orchestra
and chorus

conducted by
herbert von karajan

the classic 1956 emi mono studio recording, xr remastered in ambient stereo

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disc one

ACT ONE

1. Introduction (3:37)
2. Wie du warst! Wie du bist! (2:58)
3. Du bist mein Bub', du bist mein Schatz! (5:39)
4. Der Feldmarschall sitzt im krowatischen Wald (4:10)
5. Quinquin, es ist ein Besuch (1:49)
6. Selbstverständlich empfängt mich Ihr Gnaden (8:18)
7. Hat Sie schon einmal (0:56)
8. Macht das einem lahmen Esel aus mir? (2:56)
9. Geben mir Euer Gnaden den Grasalf' da (1:45)
10. Wollen Euer Gnaden leicht den Jungen Herren da (1:22)
11. I komm' glei (2:58)
12. Di rigori armato il seno (2:10)
13. Als Morgengabe (3:02)
14. Mein leiber Hippolyte (3:39)
15. Da geht er hin, der aufgeblasene schlechte Kerl (5:19)
16. Ach, du bist wider da! (5:34)
17. Die Zeit, die ist ein sonderbar Ding (2:26)
18. Mein schöner Schatz (4:20)
19. Ich werd' jetzt in die Kirchen (7:22)

disc two

ACT TWO

1. Introduction (0:38)
2. Ein ernster Tag, ein grosser Tag (1:09)
3. In dieser feierlichen Stunde der Prüfung (3:18)
4. Mir ist die Ehre widerfahren (7:49)
5. Ich Kenn' Ich schon recht wohl! (4:01)
6. Jetzt aber kommt mein Herr Zukünftiger (3:00)
7. Brav, Faninal, er weiss, was sich gehört (4:30)
8. Wird kommen über Nacht (2:09)
9. Hab nichts dawider (3:47)
10. Was Sie ist ... Mit Ihren Augen voll Tränen (3:41)
11. Herr Baron von Lerchenau! (7:45)
12. Er muss mich pardonieren (6:32)
13. Da lieg' ich! (6:40)
14. Da ... Herr Cavalier! (4:52)

Recorded 10-15 & 17-22 December, 1956

Kingsway Hall, London

Produced by Walter Legge

XR remastered by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf as the Feldmarschallin.

CD One: 70:19; CD Two: 58:51; CD Three: 61:48

Total duration: 3hr 11:57



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Technical Note on Mono vs Stereo

In 1956 most record companies were starting to think about stereo. Some felt it would be the “next big thing” to drive sales in the future, others were less sure. EMI’s great British rivals Decca often seemed to be ahead of the game, whereas EMI by comparison appeared a more cautious, conservative outfit. Decca had had a two year head start in the UK with vinyl and long playing records over EMI, and by 1954 were making their first experimental stereo recordings, even though stereo replay was not yet a domestic possibility. And so, despite the scepticism of EMI’s Walter Legge, the larger company began to follow suit. Nobody wanted to be caught without back catalogue ready to issue if stereo ever arrived and then took off commercially.

The early approach to making recordings in stereo would now be thought of as highly unusual. For a number of years, into the early 1960s, two separate teams would work on a recording, one for mono and one for stereo. At first the top engineers made the mono recordings, leaving the stereo production to the “b team”. They used different microphones in different positions and ended up with a different balance. As time went on the top guys started doing more and more stereo work until the practise started to be abandoned around 1961. Thereafter mono releases were derived by mixing the two stereo channels into one.

In the case of *Der Rosenkavalier* the official release version, made by the main production team, was mono. Nobody could know whether the stereo version would ever be released, and even if it was, whether anyone would buy it. The balance was significantly different between singers and orchestra – it was as if the stereo version was almost an afterthought – and yet this stereo release is the one most of us are now familiar with. (A similar thing happened in 1967 with The Beatles’ *Sgt. Pepper* album - purists prefer the mono version, which the band mixed over three weeks, over the quick stereo mix produced in three days after they’d gone home, just in case stereo took off in pop music.)

In the mid-nineties Dame Elisabeth Schwarzkopf was enlisted as “re-engineering producer” for a CD reissue, now long out of print, of *Der Rosenkavalier*. She chose to work with the mono release. For her, and others, this was how it should sound. It’s that carefully-crafted mono recording we’ve chosen to work with for Pristine. XR remastering has worked wonders to open out the sound here – without changing the fundamental character of the recording, it makes the original sound somewhat boxy and antique by comparison. I like to think Dame Elisabeth would have approved.

Andrew Rose



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COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO
PACO 167

disc three

ACT THREE

1. Einleitung und Pantomime (6:49)
2. Hab'n Euer Gnadenn noch weitre Befehle? (2:33)
3. Nein, nein, nein, nein! I trink' kein Wein (1:33)
4. Ach, lass Sie schon einmal das fade Wort! (3:19)
5. Die schöne Musi! (2:46)
6. Wie wie Stund' hingeht (4:53)
7. Oh weh, was maken wir?... Halt! Keiner rührt sich! (5:39)
8. Sind desto eher im Klaren (1:42)
9. Muss jetzt partout zu ihr!... Ihre hochfürstliche Gnaden (10:03)
10. Ist halt vorbei (2:39)
11. Mein Gott, es war nicht mehr als eine Farce (2:19)
12. Heut' oder morgen oder den übernächsten Tag (4:35)
13. Marie Theres'!... Hab' mir's gelobt (6:13)
14. Ist ein Traum, kann nicht wirklich sein (3:46)
15. Ist ein Traum... Spür nur dich (2:57)

CAST

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf - Die Feldmarschallin
Christa Ludwig - Octavian
Teresa Stich-Randall - Sophie
Otto Edelmann - Der Baron Ochs auf Lerchenau
Eberhard Wächter - Herr von Faninal
Ljuba Welitsch - Marianne
Paul Kuen - Vlazacchi
Kerstin Meyer - Annina
Nicolai Gedda - Ein Sänger

Philharmonia Orchestra And Chorus
Conducted by Herbert von Karajan

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