



Giulini

conducts Verdi's Falstaff



Verdi's last opera stands apart. For one thing it's his only well-known comic opera and after numerous betrayals, sacrifices, doomed heroes and heroines that comes as something of a shock. It also continues Verdi's musical evolution away from showpiece arias and duets (think *Rigoletto* or *Il Trovatore*) towards musical continuity and ensemble pieces.

Geraint Evans was an experienced Falstaff and provides us with a warm yet intensely human characterisation of the knight, inviting our empathy. His operatic home was Covent Garden, though he sang all over the world, and aside from Falstaff he was particularly noted for Italian roles such as Don Pasquale, Mozart's Figaro and Leporello, as well as Beckmesser in *Die Meistersinger* and the title role in *Wozzeck*. Evans's characterful yet powerful bass-baritone, combined with his excellent acting skills, made him ideally suited to these parts.

Joining Evans are a blend of home-grown Covent Garden regulars (Veasey, Lanigan, Langdon) and imported stars. The formidable Mistress Quickly is sung by Regina Resnik. The American had made her Met debut as a soprano in 1944 but by the mid-1950s had moved into mezzo-soprano roles. A versatile singer who was comfortable in a variety of languages and styles, Resnik is perhaps best known as Carmen, Klytemnestra, The Countess (*Queen of Spades*) and Orlovsky, and made regular appearances at Covent Garden in the 1950s and 1960s. Alice Ford is sung by the little-known Mariella Angioletti in her only role at Covent Garden, while Australian John Shaw, a noted Rigoletto, Iago and Scarpia at Covent Garden in the 1960s, is heard as Ford.

The two young lovers are beautifully portrayed by Mirella Freni and Luigi Alva. Thirty-three-year-old Alva was already a well-established tenor specialising in Mozart and Rossini, having recorded Fenton, Don Ottavio and Count Almaviva for EMI in the 1950s. Freni, just twenty-five, was at the start of her career and this production marked her Royal Opera debut. The critics were enamoured. *The Times* declared that 'never can the lovers have looked younger or sounded more in love' while *Opera Magazine* thought them to be 'most adorable pair of young lovers this opera has ever had'.

This was the first production of *Falstaff* at Covent Garden and the management hired Carlo Maria Giulini to conduct and Franco Zeffirelli to direct. The reception was universally positive with the run of seven performances almost sold out. *The Times* gushed over an 'ultra-sophisticated' production while the editor of *Opera Magazine* enjoyed it so much, he saw no less than three performances. This live BBC broadcast of the second performance of the run lets us all enjoy Verdi's sparkling comedy once more.



verdi

falstaff

disc one

1. RADIO Introduction to Falstaff (1:27)

Act 1, Scene 1

2. Falstaff! Ola! (5:12)
3. Sei polli: sei scellini...So che andiam, la notte (2:57)
4. Ma è tempo d'assottigliar l'ingegno...V'è noto un tal, qui del paese (3:53)
5. L'Onore! Ladri! (4:21)

Act 1, Scene 2

6. Alice. Meg. Nannetta (1:24)
7. Fulgida Alice! amor t'offro...Quell'otre! quel tino! (4:02)
8. In due parole (1:33)
9. Pst, pst, Nannetta... Labbra di foco! (5:46)
10. Udrai quanta egli sfoggia (3:43)

Act 2 Scene 1

11. Siam pentiti e contriti... Reverenza! (6:34)
12. Alice è mia!... Va, vecchio John (1:57)
13. Signore, v'assista il cielo! (2:43)
14. C'è a Windsor una dama (7:06)
15. È sogno? o realtà (6:19)

CAST

Geraint Evans *baritone* (Sir John Falstaff); Robert Bowman *tenor* (Bardolph); Michael Langdon *bass* (Pistol); John Lanigan *tenor* (Dr. Caius); John Shaw *baritone* (Ford); Mariella Angioletto *soprano* (Alice Ford); Mirella Freni *soprano* (Anne Ford); Josephine Veasey *mezzo-soprano* (Meg Page); Regina Resnik *mezzo-soprano* (Mistress Quickly); Luigi Alva *tenor* (Fenton)

XR remastered by **Andrew Rose**

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Regina Resnik and Geraint Evans in Falstaff, Covent Garden, 1961
Live BBC radio broadcast from Covent Garden, London, 12 May 1961

Total duration: 2hr 8:13 CD1: 58:57 CD2: 69:17

disc two

Act 2 Scene 2

1. Presenteremo un bill...Giunta all'Albergo della Giarrettiera (4:10)
2. Gaie comari di Windsor! (1:51)
3. Alfin t'ho colto, faggiante fior (3:24)
4. Quand'ero paggio (1:00)
5. Mia signora! (2:50)
6. Vien qua. Che Chiasso! (1:40)
7. C'è. C'è. Se t'agguanto! Se ti piglio! (5:27)

Act 3 Scene 1

8. Ehi! Taverniere! Mondo ladro (6:40)
9. Reverenza. La bella Alice...Quando il rintocco della mezzanotte (5:39)
10. Brava. Quelle corna saranno la mia gioia! (5:24)

Act 3 Scene 2

11. Dal labbro il canto estasiato volla (5:25)
12. Una, due, tre, quattro (4:07)
13. Ninfel! Elfi! Silfi!... Sul fin d'un soffio etesio (6:32)
14. Alto là!...Pizzica, pizzica (6:20)
15. Ogni sorta di gente dozzinale (3:59)
16. Facciamo il parentado... Tutto nel mando è burla (3:28)
17. RADIO Applause and final commentary (1:21)

Covent Garden Opera Chorus

Chorus-master: Douglas Robinson

Covent Garden Orchestra

Leader: Charles Taylor

conducted by Carlo Maria Giulini