

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO
PACO 183

Puccini

Madama Butterfly

Pristine
XR

La Bohème, which Decca have so successfully recorded, is an opera which depends on a first-rate ensemble, but *Madama Butterfly* first and foremost depends on the artist who sings the name part. Let it be said at once that Renata Tebaldi is not merely a good but a great exponent of the part. She is by far the best Butterfly I have heard since Destinn, than which there can be no higher praise. As in Decca's *Bohème* there is not a weak member of the cast and the opera has been produced with the same care for realistic detail. We do hear Butterfly and her relatives and friends approaching from the distance and ever coming nearer, so that the exquisite theme on the violins has its full effect; we do hear, in the last act, that Butterfly has carried her sleeping child off-stage and her high B natural reaches us *pianissimo* (not *fortissimo* as lately heard at Covent Garden!). Knocks on the door, dramatic points in this opera, are given as required by the score, and altogether there is the vivid effect of a stage performance.

The recording of the voices is remarkably good and Tebaldi's soprano comes over without distortion even at the most climatic moments. The one disappointment, as in *Bohème*, is the recording of the fine orchestral playing. It is not just a matter of being faint but of lacking bloom and volume. In this matter alone the old H.M.V. set is better, but so superb is Tebaldi that the recording of the orchestra soon ceased to worry me. Giuseppe Campora has a very pleasant voice and gives such a sympathetic rendering of his part that one almost forgets what a cad Pinkerton was. His phrasing and variety of tone are admirable.

Inghilleri is much better cast as Sharpless than he was as Marcel and he sings very well all through. I have heard the parts of Suzuki and Goro better characterised, but Nell Rankin and Piero de Palma, if not imaginative, are entirely adequate.

Tebaldi avoids the archness that lies in wait for singers of her part while suggesting the girlishness of Butterfly—until tragedy overwhelms her and she takes on a new stature. The passage leading up to *Un bel di* is exquisitely done, the artist showing here, as in the last cadence of the Flower Duet, the section of the love-duet beginning *Vogliatemi bene* (with violin solo) and the lullaby in the last act that she has a real command of *mezza-voce*: and she sings *Un bel di* naturally and without any straining after effect. There is no sense of strain in the aria *Che tu madre*, which tries many artists, but real drama with a generous pouring out of the voice, as again in the wonderful passage after the canon shot in the harbour. In the final tragic scene, which is almost unbearably poignant, Tebaldi drew tears from this apparently case-hardened reviewer.

As the opera ended I felt a new admiration for a score I have always loved and much gratitude to Decca for giving us a great performance by Tebaldi and worthy ones by everyone else.

It should be noted that Erede, while insisting on the faithful observance of Puccini's directions, gives the singers that due latitude which Toscanini denied them in the recent recording of *La Traviata*. If succeeding operas (I eagerly await *Manon Lescaut*, *Il Tabarro* and *Gianni Schicchi*, to say nothing of *Otello* and *Falstaff*) can be as well cast and produced as *La Bohème* and *Madama Butterfly* then the outlook is favourable indeed.

A.R., The Gramophone, February 1952

puccini

madama butterfly

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renata tebaldi madama butterfly
giuseppe campora pinkerton

nell rankin suzuki
giovanni inghilleri sharpless
fernando corena schauard
piero de palma goro
fernando corena bonze
gianna diozzi kate pinkerton
melchiorre luise prince yamadori
michele calvino imperial commissioner

santa cecilia academy
chorus & orchestra
conducted by alberto erede

studio recording, 1951



puccini

madama butterfly

disc one

ACT ONE

1. E soffitto...e pareti (2:16)
2. Questa è la cameriera (4:01)
3. Dovunque al mondo (3:32)
4. Quale amania vi prende! (3:30)
5. Ah! Ah! quanto cielo! (3:13)
6. Gran ventura (3:39)
7. L'imperial Commissario (2:13)
8. Vieni, amor mio! (2:27)
9. Ieri son salita tutta sola (4:27)
10. Ed eccoci in famiglia (5:29)
11. Viene la sera (3:21)
12. Bimba dagli occhi pieni di malia (3:12)
13. Vogliatemi bene, un bene piccolino (6:58)

ACT TWO

14. E izaghi e Izanami (7:09)
15. Un bel di vedremo (4:47)

CAST

Renata Tebaldi (soprano) - Madama Butterfly
Giuseppe Campora (tenor) - Pinkerton
Nell Rankin (mezzo-soprano) - Suzuki
Giovanni Inghilleri (baritone) - Sharpless
Piero de Palma (tenor) - Goro
Fernando Corena (bass) - Bonze
Gianna Diozzi (mezzo-soprano) - Kate Pinkerton
Melchiorre Luise (bass) - Prince Yamadori
Michele Calvino (baritone) - Imperial
Commissioner

disc two

ACT TWO continued

1. C'è Entrate (3:12)
2. Non lo sapete insomma (1:49)
3. A voi però giurerei fede costante (3:17)
4. Or a noi (5:52)
5. E questo e questo (2:19)
6. Che tua madre dovrà (2:52)
7. Io scendo al piano (1:50)
8. Vespa! Rospo maledetto! (1:49)
9. Una nave da guerra (2:30)
10. Scuoti quella fronda di ciliegio (4:51)
11. Or vienmi ad adornar (4:57)
12. Coro a bocca chiusa (2:53)
13. Oh eh! Oh eh! Oh eh! (7:07)
14. Già il sole! (2:03)
15. Povera Butterfly! (2:45)
16. Io so che alle sue ...Oh! l'amara fragranza (3:36)
17. Addio, fiorito (1:41)
18. Glielo dirai...Premetto (2:01)
19. Che vuol da me (5:07)
20. Come una mosca prigioniera (2:42)
21. Con onor muore (5:26)

Santa Cecilia Academy Chorus and Orchestra
conducted by Alberto Erede



XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of Renata Tebaldi
as Madama Butterfly

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Recording Engineer: Gil Went

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