

Very occasionally the Metropolitan Opera strikes box office gold. In the 1930s the sell-out combination of Kirsten Flagstad and Lauritz Melchior in *Tristan und Isolde* proved crucial in keeping the opera house afloat during the depression. In the 1960s it was the pairing of Birgit Nilsson and Franco Corelli in *Turandot* that became the hottest opera ticket in New York. Both were relative newcomers to the Met: Nilsson made her house debut as Isolde in 1959, while Corelli made his as Manrico in *Il Trovatore* in 1961, just a year before this broadcast.

Although the Met had premiered *Turandot* as early as 1926, it had been out of the Met's repertoire for thirty-one years until it was brought back in 1961. General Manager Rudolf Bing's decision to bring the opera back into the repertoire was inspired because he could showcase two of his greatest stars, whose usual repertoire tended not to overlap on stage together. Nilsson, with her cool, steely tone, was the perfect embodiment of the ice princess, while Corelli brings true Italianate passion and fire. Famously, they both hyped up a good-natured competition over who could either sing the loudest or hold the high notes the longest. Together they deliver Puccini's music with full-throated power designed to thrill and excite even the most jaded of opera lovers. It is no surprise that both continue to hold the record for the most Met appearances as Turandot and Calàf.

The role of Liù is sung by Licia Albanese, in her last Met broadcast. Albanese sang almost all of the major Puccini heroines in her long career, and indeed had sung Liù during the Coronation season at Covent Garden in 1937 with Eva Turner in the title role. Albanese brings real pathos to the role, particularly so in the final act.

Conductor Kurt Adler was born in Bohemia and had a promising conducting career in central Europe before emigrating to the United States in 1938. Most of his Jewish family members, including his parents, died in the Holocaust. Adler was appointed chorus master at the Met in 1943 and between 1951 and 1972 he conducted more than 300 performances with the company.



disc one
(77:36)

ACT ONE, SCENE ONE

1. RADIO *Opening announcement* (0:21)
2. Popolo di Pekino! (4:05)
3. Perduta la battaglia (1:20)
4. Gira la cote, gira, gira! (2:52)
5. Perché tarda la luna? (4:00)
6. O giovinetto! (4:18)
7. Figlio, che fai? (3:55)
8. Silenzio! (3:54)
9. Signore, ascolta! (2:40)
10. Non piangere, Liù (2:22)
11. Ah! per l'ultima volta! (3:02)
12. RADIO *End of Act 1 - Start of Act 2* (1:28)

ACT TWO, SCENE ONE

13. Olà, Pang! Olà, Pong (3:18)
14. Ho una casa nell'Honan (3:28)
15. O mondo, pieno di pazzi innamorati! (4:18)
16. Uditte trombe! Altro che pace! (4:16)

ACT TWO, SCENE TWO

17. Un giuramento atroce mi costringe (4:07)
18. Popolo di Pekino! (1:35)
19. In questa Reggia (2:39)
20. O Principi, che a lunghe caravane (3:29)
21. Straniero, ascolta! (4:32)
22. Gelo che ti dà foco (3:04)
23. Figlio del cielo! (2:54)
24. Tre engmi m'hai proposto (4:06)
25. RADIO *End of Act 2* (1:32)

disc two
(40:57)

ACT THREE, SCENE ONE

1. RADIO *Start of Act 3* (0:34)
2. Così comanda Turandot (3:10)
3. Nessun dorma! (3:24)
4. Tu che guardi le stelle (4:17)
5. Principessa divina (2:48)
6. Quel nome! (1:30)
7. Tanto amore segreto (3:24)
8. Tu, che di gel sei cinta (3:06)
9. Liù...Liù...sorgi! (4:31)
10. Principessa di morte! (3:27)
11. O mio fio mattutino (4:22)

ACT THREE, SCENE TWO

12. Diecimila anni al nostro Imperatore! (3:51)
13. RADIO *Closing announcement* (2:31)

PRISTINE
AUDIO

PACO 221

CAST

La principessa Turandot - Birgit Nilsson
Calaf - Franco Corelli
Liù - Licia Albanese
Ping - Frank Guarrera
Pang - Robert Nagy
Pong - Charles Anthony
Timur - Ezio Flagello
L'imperatore Altoum - Alessio De Paolis
Un mandarino - Calvin Marsh

Chorus and Orchestra of the
Metropolitan Opera
conducted by Kurt Adler

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Franco Corelli & Birgit Nilsson

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