

This third and final volume of Pristine's Callas aria series brings together some of her most sustained dramatic encounters. Three scenes from Spontini's *La vestale*, recorded at La Scala with Tullio Serafin in 1955, lead to Verdi's "Tu che le vanità" and the three extended *Mad Scenes* recorded with Nicola Rescigno and the Philharmonia in 1958.

The Spontini group completes the selections from *Callas at La Scala* begun in Volume 2. Reviewing the original LP in *The Gramophone* in June 1958, Andrew Porter set Callas beside Rosa Ponselle, whose tonal beauty remained a formidable standard. Callas brought a different intensity to the words. In "Tu che invoco" he especially admired the dramatic and tender continuation beyond Ponselle's shorter recorded excerpt.

"O Nume tutelar" concentrates Giulia's distress into a prayer; "Caro oggetto" completes the group. Porter also praised the balance between Callas and Serafin's orchestra.

Elisabetta's great scene from *Don Carlo* completes the Verdi recital represented in Volume 1. Its demands drew reservations from Philip Hope-Wallace in *The Gramophone*: his 1959 review questioned details of vocal colour and the steadiness of the ending, while his stereo reassessment

sought greater weight and breadth. Admiration for Callas's characterisation did not preclude criticism of its execution.

The *Mad Scenes* allow her dramatic imagination a broader canvas. In *Anna Bolena*, supporting voices and chorus sustain the theatrical continuity as recollection gives way to alarm, dismay and defiance. Hope-Wallace admired this emotional range. The lyricism of "Al dolce guidami" is one stage in a journey that reaches its culmination in "Coppia iniqua".

Thomas's Ophelia inhabits a more elusive world. Hope-Wallace found dramatic truth in the tenderness, quiet song fragments and sudden rhythmic changes of the *Hamlet* scene, despite a strong objection to its climactic high note. Porter's 1960 review was exceptionally appreciative.

Bellini's *Il pirata* closes the programme with another extended finale. Hope-Wallace admired the changing moods, prayerful passages and exciting conclusion, while again finding the upper notes troubling. Enthusiasm and reservation coexist throughout these reviews. Across these longer scenes, each heroine acquires her own pace of thought and her own manner of confronting catastrophe.

PACO 242

callas

arias, vol. 3

great scenes
la vestale
don carlo

mad scenes
anna bolena
hamlet
il pirata

maria callas, soprano
philharmonia orchestra and chorus
orchestra del teatro alla scala
tullio serafin & nicola rescigno

studio recordings, 1955 & 1958

Pristine
XR

maria callas

arias, volume 3

PRISTINE
AUDIO

PACO 242

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Tracks 1–3

Recorded 9–12 June 1955
Teatro alla Scala, Milan
Ambient stereo presentation

Track 4

Recorded during sessions of
19, 21 & 24 September 1958
No. 1 Studio, Abbey Road,
London · stereo

Tracks 5–7

Recorded 24–25 September 1958
Kingsway Hall, London · stereo

Total duration: 75:20

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SPONTINI La vestale

1. Tu che invoco (10:49)
2. O Nume tutelar (2:30)
3. Caro oggetto (3:49)

VERDI Don Carlo

4. Tu che le vanità (10:43)

DONIZETTI Anna Bolena

5. Piangete voi?... Al dolce guidami castel natio (19:59)

THOMAS Hamlet

6. À vos jeux... Partagez-vous mes fleurs... Et maintenant écoutez ma chanson (10:28)

BELLINI Il pirata

7. Oh! s'io potessi... Col sorriso d'innocenza (17:02)

Maria Callas, **soprano**

Orchestra del Teatro alla Scala, Milan (1–3)
conducted by Tullio Serafin

Philharmonia Orchestra (4)
Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus (5–7)
conducted by Nicola Rescigno