

MARGARET HARSHAW
SINGS WAGNER
BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
CONDUCTED BY CHARLES MUNCH

MARGARET
HARSHAW

1 Introduction 0:19

2 TANNHAUSER:
Elisabeth's Aria - 'Dich Teure Halle' 3:15

3 DER FLIEGENDE HOLLANDER:
Senta's Ballad - 'Jo ho ho hoe!' 7:34

4 GOTTERDÄMMERUNG:
Siegfried's funeral music and Brünnhilde's Immolation 27:07

Broadcast recording from the second half of the concert of 19th February, 1955

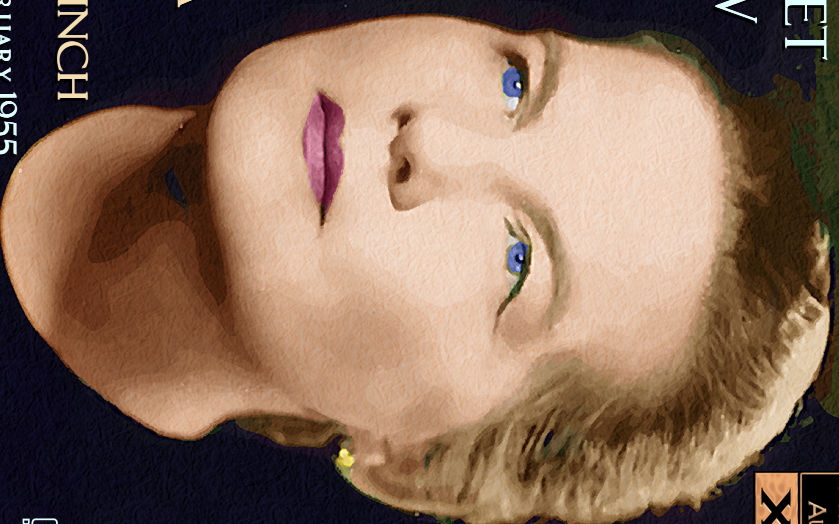
Recording from the collection of Leslie Austin

Transfer and XR remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, December 2008

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Margaret Harshaw from the collection of Daniel Shigo

Total duration: 38:15 © 2008 Pristine Audio.

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RECORDED 19TH FEBRUARY 1955



PRISTINE
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PACO 029

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Margaret Harshaw (b. 1909--d. Nov. 7, 1997) was an American opera singer celebrated especially for her Wagnerian performances at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City for 22 seasons beginning in 1942, singing both soprano and mezzo-soprano roles.

Ms. Harshaw sang at the Metropolitan Opera from November 1942, when she made her debut as the Second Norm in Wagner's "Die Gotterdammerung," until March 1964, when she gave her final performance as Ortud in "Lohengrin." Because she spent the first nine years of her Met career as a mezzo-soprano and then switched to soprano roles, she sang more Wagner roles than any other singer in the Met's history.

These include 14 roles in the "Ring" operas, in which she began as a Rhinemaiden and eventually sang all three Brunnhildes, as well as both Senta and Mary (in the same season) in "Die Fliegende Hollander," Isolde in "Tristan und Isolde," Magdalene in "Die Meistersinger," Kundry in "Parsifal" and Elisabeth and Venus in "Tannhauser."

Miss Harshaw was born in Philadelphia in 1909 and began singing in church choirs as a child. From 1928 to 1932, she sang alto with the Mendelssohn Club, a chorus that performed with Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra. A series of competition victories in the early 1930's led to performances in Philadelphia, Washington and New York City, all before she enrolled at the Juilliard Graduate School to begin her formal studies with Anna Schoen-Rene in 1936.

In March 1942, Miss Harshaw won the Metropolitan Opera's Auditions of the Air, and she began her career at the house at the start of the next season. In 1950 Rudolf Bing, the Met's general manager, was looking for a dramatic soprano to succeed Helen Traubel, particularly in Wagner roles, and persuaded Ms. Harshaw to switch to the higher range. She did so with notable success: her recordings as a soprano show her to have a clear timbre and considerable power.

All told, she sang 375 performances of 39 roles in 25 works at the house and was heard in 40 of the Met's weekly live broadcasts. Her non-Wagner roles at the Met included four in Verdi works -- Amneris in "Aida," Ulrica in "Un Ballo in Maschera," Mistress Quickly in "Falstaff" and Azucena in "Il Trovatore" -- as well as Donna Anna in Mozart's "Don Giovanni," Gertrud in Humperdinck's "Hansel und Gretel," Genevieve in Debussy's "Pelleas et Melisande" and Herodias in Strauss's "Salome."

Ms. Harshaw also sang at Covent Garden, Glyndebourne, the San Francisco Opera, the Paris Opera and with companies in Philadelphia, Cincinnati, New Orleans, San Antonio, Pittsburgh and Houston. She also made several Latin American tours and was a soloist with many of the major American orchestras. Roles she sang outside the Met include Dalila in Saint-Saens's "Samson et Dalila," Leonore in Beethoven's "Fidelio" and the title roles in Puccini's "Turandot" and Gluck's "Alceste."

Notes drawn mainly from obituary notice in the New York Times, November 11, 1997

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