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Stokowski Puccini's Turandot

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When *Turandot* is as magnificently performed as it was at the Metropolitan Opera House, it is a breathtaking spectacle. The conducting of Leopold Stokowski, who got to the podium on crutches (he is still recovering from a serious accident to his hip), is extraordinarily dashing and vivid, and the cast is of such high quality that few opera houses in the world could touch it. Birgit Nilsson belts out her powerful tones with rare brilliance. Franco Corelli is an ideal Calaf - handsome, virile and vocally splendid. And Anna Moffo is a perfect Liu, touchingly lyric in voice and very beautiful to look at. The lesser characters are played with individuality and spirit, the chorus sings superbly, and all the trimmings are handled with polished artistry. Though *Turandot* may not be Puccini's greatest opera, its production at the Met is certainly one of the greatest shows to be seen currently on Broadway.

The New Yorker (4 March 1961) by Winthrop Sargeant

As he slowly made his way on crutches down in the pit, the Metropolitan Opera House exploded into a standing ovation for Leopold Stokowski who was, at 78, finally making his debut as a Met conductor. As Turandot, Birgit Nilsson poured forth such a flood of soaring, stabbing top notes that the ear rang in disbelief. Franco Corelli, the company's handsome new 36-year-old Italian singer, looked like a prince who might sweep a lady off her feet, and he sang like one, too. When asked after the performance how he felt about the tumultuous evening, Stokowski replied: "Really great music, written from the heart. I felt it went to the hearts of those who were listening." Was he unduly tired after such an exacting ordeal? "No," he said softly, "conducting never tires. You give much, but you receive more." **Newsweek (6 March 1961)**

Turandot is Puccini's most fascinating opera and the new production does it justice. Its master is Leopold Stokowski, who made a brilliant Met debut at 78 and on crutches (he is recovering from a broken hip). Having always been a theatrical conductor in the concert hall, he seemed completely at home in the theatre, drawing all the score's turbulence from the orchestra without trying to make it the star of the show at the singer's expense.

Newcomer Franco Corelli, as the prince who stakes his life on winning the cold Turandot, is as handsome as any tenor who ever walked the Met stage and has a big, bronze voice that he can fling forth most of the time without strain. Anna Moffo, as Liu, makes the part far more than the usual sweet rag doll: singing with impeccable beauty of tone but also with surprising force, she gives the character backbone, thus rendering plausible the scene in which she chooses to die rather than to betray Calaf. Beyond a doubt, it is soprano Nilsson who dominates the production. The famed second act aria, in questa reggia, and the whole scene that follows, is one of the most difficult half-hours in all opera. Nilsson's voice was unshakable. She was never shrill and her crystal voice was hard without harshness, cutting without hurting, thus embodying the ultimate paradox of Turandot. **Time (3 March 1961)**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
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Giacomo Puccini Turandot

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Birgit Nilsson Turandot
Franco Corelli Calaf
Alessio de Paulis Emperor
Bonaldo Giaiotti Timur
Anna Moffo Liu
Frank Guarrera Ping
Robert Nagy Pang
Charles Anthony Pong
Calvin Marsh Mandarin
Edilio Ferraro Prince of Persia

Leopold Stokowski
Metropolitan Opera
Chorus & Orchestra

Live broadcast recording,
March 4, 1961

Puccini Turandot

Disc One

- [1] Introduction by Milton Cross (3:09)

Act 1

- [2] Popolo di Pekino! (4:03)
[3] Perduta la battaglia (1:28)
[4] Gira la cote, gira, gira! (2:44)
[5] Perché tarda la luna (4:25)
[6] O giovinetto! (4:31)
[7] Figlio, che fai? (3:57)
[8] Silenzio! (4:13)
[9] Signore, ascolta! (3:00)
[10] Non piangere, Liù! (2:35)
[11] Ah! per l'ultima volta! (3:13)

Act 2 Scene 1

- [12] Olà, Pang! Olà, Pong! (3:14)
[13] Ho una casa nell'Honan (3:25)
[14] O mondo, pieno di pazzi innamorati! (4:26)
[15] Uditte trombe! Altro che pace! (3:58)

Scene 2

- [16] Un giuramento atroce mi costringe (4:04)
[17] Popolo di Pekino! (1:38)
[18] In questa Reggia (2:51)

- [19] O Principi, che a lunghe caravane (3:45)
[20] Straniero, ascolta! (4:40)
[21] Gelo che ti dà foco (2:53)
[22] Figlio del cielo! (3:04)
[23] Tre enigmi m'hai proposto (3:55)

Disc Two

Act 3 Scene 1

- [1] Così comanda Turandot (3:27)
[2] Nessun dorma! (3:29)
[3] Tu che guardi le stelle (4:18)
[4] Principessa divina (2:40)
[5] Quel nome! (2:19)
[6] Tanto amore segreto (2:28)
[7] Tu che di gel sei cinta (3:04)
[8] Liù! Liù! sorgi! (4:35)
[9] Principessa di morte! (3:39)
[10] O mio fio mattutino (4:23)

Scene 2

- [11] Diecimila anni al nostro Imperatore! (3:11)
[12] Closing announcements (1:58)

**Metropolitan Opera Orchestra & Chorus
Leopold Stokowski**

March 4, 1961

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Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on
a photograph of **Corelli,
Nilsson & de Paolis in
Turandot at the
Metropolitan Opera**

Total duration: **1hr 58:41**



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